

## Interview with Lucius D. Battle

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUCIUS D. BATTLE

Interviewed by: Dayton Mak

Initial interview date: July 10, 1991

Copyright 1998 ADST

*Q: Mr. Ambassador, you have had a highly successful and varied career in the United States government. May I ask you first of all about your background—where you were born and raised, what schools and colleges you attended and why you chose those particular ones, what you studied, what were your primary interests, what were the influences that led you to a career in the Department of State?*

BATTLE: I was born in a small, grossly unattractive town called Dawson, Georgia. My grandfather had lived for many years and owned a large amount of land, buildings and other investments in the area. He was a strong man in every way; he very much wanted his children stay close to the family nest, even after they were grown. He built a very large, Greek revival house—pretty awful, but interesting. Behind it he built the only tennis court in the city of Dawson. He had six children—one died. As each grew and got married he would stake them in a business and give them a house. So up and down the street were all sorts of Battle houses—four were actually built. As he got older, he became bored with the whole thing and moved away to Atlanta for the rest of his life. He and my father, who owned a couple of hardware stores in the area and my uncle, who later became involved in various businesses, decided to form a group and go to Florida in late 1925. Like so many things that my grandfather and father did, they were a little bit late, but

## Library of Congress

the price would have alright if they had waited. So they built in the Bradenton-Sarasota area of Florida. This was a relatively new world and they built what then was known as a subdivision; today it is known as a development. They bought a lot of other property in the area at the peak of the real-estate prices. The whole enterprise collapsed. The Battles and the Durhams—that was my grandfather—were in bad financial straits. They owned a lot of property, but didn't have any income. My father moved his hardware store to the area and he ran that. My grandfather went on to bigger and better things. I never could figure out what he actually did for a living. When we lived in Dawson, he used to sit in a rocking chair discussing projections of cotton futures with people who would come by. He rocked on the porch and made his decision on cotton and other futures. A lot of money seemed to have come in that way. He died relatively well off, but a large amount of money went down the drain.

I grew up in Florida in the late 1920's and early 30's. The market crash of 1929 sent us back even more. So things were really hard. I had a pleasant enough life. I wasn't unhappy; I didn't know what I was missing and everything seemed alright. I haven't missed much in my later years, but at the beginning it was pretty dull and dreary. Florida was more appealing then than it is today. In those days, Bradenton-Sarasota were sleepy little towns. I grew up in their vicinity.

At that point, several things happened. I was an avid reader. I read very rapidly and I read a great deal. I went to a public school, which was not very good—it had one or two very good teachers. I was somewhat self-educated in the sense that I read everything in the library. We lived near the library and I was there all the time. I thoroughly enjoyed the reading; a read ahead of my age. I started getting the Sunday New York Times and I loved to read about the theater and what was happening in the adult world. I read all of it, but the Arts and Leisure Section gave me the greatest satisfaction. I came to know a good deal about the art world; there was no legitimate theater in our area, but I learned who was writing for the New York stage, how they were doing, who was doing what. This became a

## Library of Congress

great interest. I read every book that was remotely suitable and a lot that weren't. I did very well in high school; it was a breeze for me. I was in the top two or three in the class.

We are now in the middle of the Depression—1935. I went to the University of Florida. I didn't know what I missed by not being in a better institution, but I had a great time. I was quite happy. I didn't work as hard as I should; I had to work because my parents were in financial bad shape. So I waited on table; I worked in the library for seven years which, for someone like myself who loved books, was very enjoyable. I continued my reading. Then the war came and interrupted my days of education in Gainesville, Florida. The war, in large measure, was kind to me. I first went as a civilian to Washington in the War Department working in the civilian personnel office. I stayed for about a year.

Then I went into the Navy in 1943 and found myself in a staff jobs; I was on the staff of COMSOPAC who commanded a service squadron in the South Pacific which was part of Admiral Halsey's staff. I was an ensign and then a Lieutenant, Junior Grade, but I was put in charge of a lot of ships. I routed them around and planned their itineraries. I made up convoys, getting destroyers and destroyer escorts to the right places. They were there to protect various task forces which were being sent for various purposes. We handled all the logistical ships—cargo with fresh produce, etc. These were very important missions, essential to the successful operations of the Navy in the whole area. I suddenly found myself with enormous responsibilities, particularly as the war progressed. We stayed somewhat in the backwaters, but I found myself carrying enormous responsibilities. It taught me a good deal about myself. I realized that I was fairly competent and after a few months, I knew more about the ships that we were managing than the more senior commanders. I didn't know one ship from another when I entered the Navy, but I then memorized all the statistics—how many men the ship would carry, how many tons of cargo—dry and wet—it could carry. I could tell you the capacity of any ship that a task force might need. I could rattle off those statistics from memory. Many of the people I worked with were regular Navy and they thought that they had been assigned to a rather second echelon command. It wasn't that important, but they didn't know anything about the ships.

## Library of Congress

That was of course not true of all of the officers, but of the great majority. They couldn't wait to be assigned to a cruiser or a destroyer. They felt that their careers would be built on their combat records rather than sitting the war out in Noumea, New Caledonia where we were.

I was there for some months and then I was asked to go to Hawaii to join the CINCPAC (Commander-in-Chief, Pacific) staff. So I went there and spent approximately the last year of the war there in Honolulu. That was interesting, although we seemed a little bit out of everything by that time. I could feel the difference between being in a top command situation and being in New Caledonia. I continued to do the same kind of work in CINCPAC that I had done in Noumea—making up convoys, taking care of the planning for the ships and their deactivation after the end of the war. It was a very pleasant assignment.

During the whole period I was in New Caledonia and in Honolulu, I read different things. I read a great deal about international affairs and diplomacy. I was deeply concerned about eliminating the possibilities of another world war. I felt that every citizen would have to make an effort to deal with the problems of the world. I developed my interests in international affairs largely in New Caledonia, although I had taken courses at the University of Florida in international politics. My teacher was William Carleton who used to write a great deal for Harpers and The Atlantic Monthly. He was a flaming liberal and intellectual. He gave the most exciting lectures that I could remember. I whetted my appetite for political issues; so I decided that was what I wanted to get involved in.

My interest in international affairs really developed during the war years, partly because I felt that there had to be a better peace than was developed at Versailles. I used to joke with my Red Cross lady friend and lots of other people telling them that I was going to the Japanese Treaty conference. Everybody would laugh. But I did go. I stood besides Dean Acheson when he signed the Treaty—that was considerably later. In any case, during the war, I decided that I would like a career. I had loved the year I had spent in Washington

## Library of Congress

in the War Department. It was war time; it was exciting and I enjoyed that enormously. I got my law degree—I lacked only one semester and had gone back to finish it. I graduated with the law degree, which has never meant much to me particularly. Then I tried to find a way to get a government job—in the State Department.

People don't believe the way I got in, particularly since so many things happened to me so early in my working life. I felt I was too old and had not learned any foreign language, so I didn't think I could pass the examination to enter the Foreign Service. I knew a smidgen of French, but I really couldn't handle it well enough. I decided that I had to come in as a civil servant. In those days, there were two personnel offices in the Department: one, for the Foreign Service and one for the Civil Service. I went to the latter since I didn't think I had a chance of passing the Foreign Service exam. I decided that the thing to do to find anyone who would speak to me was to go to the Department Personnel office every day, which is what I did. Every morning, shortly after 9 a.m. Pretty soon, everybody recognized me. They would wave to me and I would wave back. After a little while, this became a little joke. I had various offers from other employers—it was a good time to be looking for employment. I thought that if I didn't get something from State soon, I would have to take up some of the other offers. One offer came from Defense Department; I could have returned there, but I really didn't want to do that. I really wanted to go to State. So I went each morning. I had reached the rank of GS-9 or 10 when I had worked in Washington previously for the War Department. I wasn't very senior. Finally, the Department said that they had a job in management planning, which was similar to what I had done in the War Department. They told me that I was over-qualified for the job, but that if I were interested, I could have it. I went over to talk to the people for whom I would be working and went to work for them.

I had been in the management office for about six-eight months when the Department had a big reduction-in-force. Since I was one of the last employed, the “last in, first out” rule applied to me. I was about to be thrown out of the Department. But by this time, I had gotten to know a lot of people. So I went scouting around the Department for possible

## Library of Congress

employment. not through the Personnel Office, but on my own. I had a number of offers, the most interesting of which was to be on the Canada desk, which was part of the Bureau of European Affairs, under the British Commonwealth Division—Canada was then treated as part of the Commonwealth.

The Canadian desk said they would like to have me and I said that I would be delighted to come. I got an appointment as a GS-12, which was a promotion of one grade from my Management Planning job. I just wanted to give you some idea of the level I was working—not exactly a senior figure. I was new and green and didn't know a lot. But I took the job with real relish. I thoroughly enjoyed it; it was my first involvement with an Embassy and briefings for the Secretary, getting material to him for his press conferences—we would provide questions that might be asked, with appropriate recommended answers. It was the first time I had really dealt with Ambassadors. I had a marvelous time. There were three of us—Andrew Foster—now dead—, myself as the deputy and a very intelligent woman, Margaret Joy Tibbetts. She was extraordinarily bright. There weren't many civil servants. There was Margaret Tibbetts, David Linebaugh and myself. I think that was it. If I might say so, I think we were a little more stimulating than a number of our colleagues. The three of us stirred things up quite a lot. I think we were good for them and they were probably good for us. They were considerably more rigid in their points of view than I was. So David, Margaret and I were together a considerable amount of time. The others would laugh about us; they were terribly interested in obtaining a promotion or another assignment. I was interested in doing the best thing we could. I don't mean to degrade the Foreign Service; I had an enormous respect for it. At the time we are discussing, Civil Service personnel were not considered top-drawer. They were not outcasts, but they were not viewed as vital material. Several people had warned me that if I went to EUR I would be in a minority. I was told that the Foreign Service would never treat me as an equal—Civil Service people would not have an easy time. But I had a ball; I loved it. I had a marvelous time. Everyone was extremely kind to me and I liked the assignment very much.

## Library of Congress

During this period on the Canadian desk, the great Dean Acheson came to the Department. He had been Under Secretary of State, then had left saying that he needed to make more money—I also think that he had had enough of the role of Under Secretary. But he was not gone long. I did not know him. He came to see Jack Hickerson, who was in charge of European Affairs, about a problem in Canada involving wood pulp—I have forgotten the details. He started to talk with Jack, then to Jack's deputy and then to Tom Wailes, who was then chief of the Canada desk. They finally called me in. By that time, the room was quite crowded. Dean Acheson said to me: “Young man, what do you think of this?”. I said: “Mr. Secretary, I think “a”, “b” and “c”. He replied: “Young man, your views are diametrically opposed to the views of Ray Atherton, who is the US Ambassador to Canada and who is currently my house-guest”. I snapped back—unwisely —: “He is entitled to his views and I am entitled to mine. I think he is wrong”. The room sort of gasped and I could see that everyone had thought that I had just ruined my career. But I didn't. I had read all of the papers that had come to our office and therefore knew a lot about the issue. That was the first time I met Dean Acheson.

After the inaugural following the elections of 1948, there were a lot of parties. I met Acheson at one of these occasions at the Canadian Embassy. Those were the only two times I had met him until he began to consider me as one of his assistants. Acheson came into the Department as Secretary. He of course knew the organization, He said he wanted a young assistant whom he could work to death. He didn't want a married man who had to worry about a family and could not concentrate fully on the Secretary. He wanted someone who would come to the office in the middle of the night, travel without notice, etc. I was still a bachelor at that point. So the Department made up a list of potential candidates. Carl Humelsine and others made up the list and then the Secretary was supposed to hold interviews. I was number one on the list because the list was alphabetical. I have never seen the list; I don't know who else was on it. The Secretary interviewed me and none of the others. We talked and he said that I had a lot of courage—he remembered the meeting on Canadian wood pulp. He asked whether I would like to work for him. I told him I would

## Library of Congress

be delighted. He told me to start the next morning. I went back to EUR to say goodbye and to move upstairs. This was March 1, 1949.

That was the opening of a whole new world to me, working for Acheson. He was a very engaging man, so bright, so difficult at times, but it was an experience. Working for him was a real experience. During the first days I was with him, I was a little scared. I was afraid I would do the wrong thing. But I was greatly impressed. He gave a speech in New York and asked me to go with him. He said he would be working on the speech and asked me to drop by that evening. He had something else to do before then. He said: "I have started to work on this speech for New York, but I had a strange experience. I used a quotation from the Bible—the New Testament—and then I thought I'd better double check the source. I did that and couldn't find it. Then I remembered that Lincoln had used that verse in one of his speeches. I found the quotation in the Lincoln speech and found out that he had misquoted the New Testament. I had been remembering all these years what Lincoln had said and not what was in the Bible". I was deeply impressed with his scholarship; I was knocked out by it.

We went to New York. It was a party honoring General Marshall, perhaps at the Freedom House. It was probably in the second week of March. That was the first time I had traveled with him. From then, we had one of the most marvelous relationships imaginable. We became very, very friendly. We laughed a lot. He was often difficult, but he gave me total trust and delegation. He told me to deal with anything that he reached his office with which I felt comfortable. What he didn't know is that I feel comfortable with almost everything, except big issues. I never bothered him with small issues and never had any trouble. I used to sign his name on lots of papers. On the back, I would put a code on the file copies of the papers that could be used subsequently to know what I had handled. I knew from that code that Dean Acheson had never seen the original paper, but that I had signed off for him. I would never have done it on any major policy issues.

*Q: Do you remember any issues that came up during your period as Acheson's assistant?*



BATTLE: The first issue that came up was my marriage. Although he had stipulated the condition that I not get married, he never, ever raised it at all. Much of this is in Acheson's book *Present at the Creation*. After I had been in the office for about six months, I told him that I wanted to get married to Betty. He seemed a little irritated, but asked me to bring her out to the Sandy Springs farm on Saturday night for dinner. He said he would have the family there to see whether they would approve. It was a very difficult thing. His son was there with his wife and his daughter with her husband and that was all. I of course knew all of them, not well, but I knew them. Betty didn't know them. She hadn't met the Secretary or his family. It was a very awkward evening for her. We went out to the farm mid-afternoon for swimming. Then cocktails and a nice dinner. We stayed for a while after and then left. Acheson called me the next morning to tell me that "we all approve. We think she is extremely nice and attractive and we think that the marriage is a good thing for you to do". Not a word was said about finding anyone to succeed me. He said to Betty, before the marriage: "How do you think you are going to take all of Luke's absences, when he is traveling with me?". Betty said that she had lived without me for twenty-five years and that therefore she supposed she could live without me for a little while longer. He laughed and said that was alright. I tried to never let the job interfere; at times that was difficult. My hours were long. Acheson gave me total trust and I tried to live up to it. As time went on, he gave me absolute carte blanche on what I did. I handled all the papers that came through the office; I set up all the meetings. He wanted me to attend all the meetings he had. I was part of his memory. I would take notes. When he received senior foreigners, I would always be in the office with him. He never objected to this practice, nor did anyone else. So I sat in all the meetings he had, both with outsiders and insiders. That was an education in itself.

Acheson had just returned to government. He was being re-briefed after an absence of a year or so. So we were reviewing everything. There meetings on all sorts of subjects—Europe, far East, etc. I sat in on all those meetings. I traveled with him wherever he went. If he had appointments in London or Paris or wherever, he would always take me

## Library of Congress

with him. There was never any question about my going. Sometimes the US Ambassador in the country would also go, but Acheson wanted me at these meetings. I kept a record of all the meetings. I did the reporting telegrams, which I never showed him. I wrote the record of the meeting and sent it. As I look back on it, it was crazy. But that is what I did. Acheson never objected. I would write little notes on papers saying that I thought it was a good idea or that I didn't think it was a good idea, that everyone thought he should the following. He then would ask me why I thought it was not a good idea; I never hesitated in defending my position. As much as I was in awe of Acheson, I thought that he was sometimes unreasonable and was about to do something terrible. He would tell people that he had gotten mad at some of the correspondence he had gotten and had dictated scathing replies, but that I would tear them up. Which was quite true. When he dictated—which he didn't do very often—the dictation would always come back to me before it went to the Secretary for signature. Sometimes, I would take the letter back to him and tell him that it was not wise to send it. It is amazing that he would accept my judgement, most of the time. He would get indignant with me from time to time, but in the main, we got along beautifully. It was a great three and half years, which I wouldn't have traded for anything.

Looking back on it, the Department was quite interesting in general. A lot of things happened. In 1948 elections, no one expected Harry Truman to be re-elected. No one contributed a penny to him. Therefore he had an absolutely free hand. He could do anything he wanted; make any appointments he wanted; he had no obligations; he had no long list of contributors. So Dean Acheson, having known the Department and the Foreign Service—he knew the people. He could appoint Foreign Service people to key posts and needed not to look to the outside. He appointed from within the Service wherever he possibly could. Jack Puerifoy and Carl Humelsine did most of the appointments of Ambassadors and Assistant Secretaries. From time to time, I would get involved if the position to be filled was to be near the Secretary. Acheson would ask me what I thought of the candidate and I would tell him. There were times when this became touchy, but he wanted my views on a lot of things. I would sometimes fight for one point of view or

## Library of Congress

another; sometimes not. Invariably he would say that what I had said made sense. That is not why I thought Acheson was wonderful.

There was one big issue which I lost on much to my regret. I think it is also mentioned in his book. It took place after the Inchon landing in Korea. The Joint Chiefs and everybody else had had great misgivings about the landing. But no one wanted to tell MacArthur he couldn't do it. It was a landing weakly supplied and weakly backed up. All the military force we had in the world was committed to Korea. Acheson was worried about the Inchon landing, but no one wanted to interject negativism in conversations with MacArthur. The military treated him like a big god. The landing was brilliant and after that no one wanted to control MacArthur. The big issue then became why the President and the Secretary of State were preventing MacArthur from crossing the 38th. parallel. MacArthur had gotten to the parallel and paused. I was in New York with Acheson at a U.N. meeting. Dean Rusk, then Assistant Secretary for the Far East, brought the new instruction to MacArthur. There were no teletypes at that time, no faxes, no computers. The typing load was unbelievable. But messages to New York could be hand carried as quickly as by any other communications means. I shared a suite with Mr. and Mrs. Acheson. When she was with him, we did that everywhere we went. The new instructions came after we had been in New York for about two and half weeks. So Rusk came to the New York office and I was sitting outside Acheson's office. Rush handed me the telegram which I read. In effect, the instructions left the decision to cross the 38th parallel up to MacArthur. The telegram said that the parallel had no sanctity; we had never accepted it as demarcation line. It did not hold MacArthur back.

When Acheson was free—he had someone in the office with him—I took the telegram in. I handed it to him and told him that the instructions gave General MacArthur much, too much latitude. The decision on how far north he should go was being left up to him. I told him that by putting no restraints on MacArthur, we were committing a great mistake. He got absolutely livid. He was already upset with me because for three weeks I had tried to make him do something that he didn't want to do. Acheson looked at me and said:

## Library of Congress

“How old are you, Luke?”. I told him that I was thirty. He said: “At age thirty you are willing to take on the Joint Chiefs. This is their judgement”. That telegram was interpreted by MacArthur as authorization to move north to the Yalu River, with all the attending horrors that followed. If he had done what we eventually did—that is dig in and hold at the 38th. parallel—it would have not given the Chinese an excuse to enter the conflict. I regret that I did not fight harder. Some years ago, in 1975, I went out to the Truman Library for the 25th Anniversary of the Korean War. Harriman, Clark Clifford, Mat Ridgeway, John Snyder—who had been in the Truman Cabinet at the time, although not involved in the issue—and I got into a big debate in which I maintained that the instructions were not clear; they left to MacArthur the decisions that he made; and they were wrong at the time. Averell got very upset—this was all on a platform in a huge auditorium. He thought that the instructions were perfectly clear. I pulled out the text and said I would read them. Averell got madder and madder. He said: “Don't read documents; listen to me”. He was determined to deify everything that Truman had done. He was trying to make it look absolutely perfect. I felt that was dishonest. So we had a huge debate, but patched up afterwards, It was not the worst argument I ever had with him.

In any case, the telegram was sent; MacArthur moved north and by the end of the year we were in desperate straits. The whole enterprise was falling apart. But this was an illustration of interjecting myself. I did not want to be a “house plant”—the current description for a non-entity. I held my own pretty well. I had to give in sometimes, but Acheson was so bright, so intelligent and so decent to work for, that it was a pleasure. I loved his jokes. We used to settle down in the late afternoons—in those days, we didn't work as long as they do today. We often had a drink; we kept Scotch and Bourbon in the safe. We would pour ourselves a drink and sit down to talk. Sometimes, he would invite someone else to join us. We had a drink and then he would go home. I would stay another 30 to 45 minutes to insure that everything that had to be dealt with that day had been completed. That was our relationship which carried on wherever we were. He would take me when he went to see Churchill or Schuman. I didn't necessarily stay with them

## Library of Congress

the whole time. I could tell when I was not welcomed. He usually preferred to have me there with him because he wanted to make sure that matters were followed up on. He also wanted witnesses and a record of conversations so that he could deal effectively with any subsequent arguments. That was my role essentially. For a young man my age, it was a heady experience. The three and half years I spent with Dean Acheson were intellectually the richest that I ever experienced. I was twenty-nine when I took the job, but you aged quickly in that job. It was extremely interesting. The whole Acheson family became my dear friends. They accepted Betty warmly. When in New York, preparing to go to San Francisco to get married, someone from the Defense Department or CIA came to see Acheson. I didn't go to the meeting. Dean came to my office, as he frequently did to ask me whether I slept well. I said: "Yes". He said that he didn't want to keep me awake that night, but wanted me to know something that just happened. The Soviets had just exploded their first nuclear weapon. That was pretty devastating information. That was the way our relationship went. He wanted me to know what was going on.

Lester Pierson, the Canadian, was a great friend of mine. He called me that day because he wanted to see Acheson. I told him I would put someone else on the phone because I was about to leave to get married. I was in a frantic rush and handed the phone to someone else.

There were some interesting aspects of this period . The McCarthy period—very difficult. One would not have expected that an attack from the outside would induce people to turn around and run. And it did not happen except in one case. I never suspected that any of the Assistant Secretaries would do anything improper. We had George Perkins, a Republican, who came in as Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. He couldn't have been better. Everybody who worked there closed ranks. It was good for the Department and the people in it. It was a meshing of all views; there were no leaks; no disloyalty to Dean Acheson, except for one. It was an amazing experience.

## Library of Congress

We had problems with two or three other appointments. Let's start with John Foster Dulles. I had known him slightly. He had run for the Senate from New York. He got royally defeated. But during the course of that campaign, he had attacked President Truman and the whole Department of State. It was a terribly vicious campaign. At least it seemed so then; I don't know whether it would seem so vicious today. Dulles did not win the seat. His great friend was Carl McCardle of the Philadelphia Bulletin. Carl called me at home and said: "I just had a long talk with John Foster Dulles. He is very concerned that the political campaign that he has been involved in will rule out his participation in international affairs in the current Administration". I paused shortly and then said: "Carl, what are you trying to tell me? Are you trying to tell me that Dulles wants to come back to work?". The answer was: "Yes, that is exactly what I am trying to convey". So the next day, I went to Secretary Acheson after the 9:15 staff meeting—that was the small staff meeting with only six or seven people attending—the Ambassador-at-Large, the Under Secretary, Humelsine, the head of the Planning staff and the Counselor. There was a later staff meetings with all the Assistant Secretaries. After the small meeting was over, I told Mr. Webb—the Under Secretary—that I had had a call from Mr. McCardle, informing me that Dulles wanted very much to resume government service and his involvement in international affairs. I was a strong believer in bipartisan foreign policy. We had no Republicans except in a few lower level jobs, like George Perkins. But we didn't have many. We had no Republicans in senior positions. So I thought it made a good deal of sense. Dulles had been on U.N. delegations several times and had been in the Department off and on for many years. He had been less of a partisan in earlier years than he became. He became one because he wanted desperately to become Secretary of State. I asked Webb what he wanted me to do about McCardle's call. He told me to forget it; don't answer, don't call back, don't have anything to do with it. He thought that the President would never accept it. So I didn't do anything. Mr. Acheson and I went to Paris for some meetings. In those days, we had a system for telegrams with special indicators called "ACTEL" which meant that they were from the Secretary and "TELAC" which meant they were for the Secretary. These messages were in single copy. So while in Paris, a "TELAC" came in from Webb, saying that he

## Library of Congress

had been talking to Dean Rusk about getting John Foster Dulles in as a consultant or Ambassador-at-Large. I took the message into the Secretary; he looked at it and said that the President would never accept it. I asked him whether he was sure and whether, from a political point of view, this might not eliminate the charge that we were not conducting a bipartisan foreign policy. I told him I thought that it might have some real advantages. He thought about it for a while and then said: "Send a telegram back to Jim Webb and tell him that if the President will buy it, I will also". So Webb took it over to the President and got his approval. So Dulles came to work, which was interesting in itself. Acheson had told me that it was not necessary for Dulles to be involved in everything. He should only see selected telegrams. I told the Secretary that it wouldn't work. He had been brought in as a general advisor. He had to see the same traffic that the senior staff saw. Acheson didn't like that response, but we proceeded on that basis. A lot of books have said that he had been brought in to work on the Japanese Peace Treaty and had been appointed as Ambassador-at-Large for that purpose. That is not true. The Secretary was concerned about what to do with Dulles once he was in the Department. The Japanese Peace Treaty was Rusk's idea, but it was not a precondition to Dulles' appointment. The appointment had nothing to do with the Japanese Treaty or any other specific function. The truth was that we needed someone to work on the Treaty and Allen Dulles was put to work on it, after his appointment. As result of my intervention with the Secretary. Dulles got to see all the cables, came to meetings on such things as the Austrian Treaty, the German issues and a whole series of important foreign policy matters. He and Acheson never liked each other. I was frequently the go-between. In the beginning, Dulles resented it. He would ask for an appointment with the Secretary and I would escort him to the door to let him in. I didn't go in with him. Obviously, Dulles resented me. He thought I was a young squirt and didn't want to have anything to do with me. So he had a couple of private meetings with the Secretary. Whatever he asked for, didn't happen. They were minor requests, but nothing happened. Finally, Dulles came to me and said that the Secretary had told him that "a, b, and c" would happen, but that nothing had taken place. So I told him that I would see what I could do. So I got his requests honored, after asking the Secretary



## Library of Congress

if it was alright. After that, Dulles became aware of the fact that he needed me to be in on his meetings with the Secretary. When he would have an appointment with Acheson, he would pass my office, which was right outside the Secretary's and say; "Luke, come on in". And I would say: "Alright, Mr. Dulles, if you wish". So I did. As time went on, the relationship between the two became dicey and tricky. The big issue of course became the Korean War in 1950. Dulles was in Japan working on the Peace Treaty when the war broke out. He immediately returned to Washington. I went to see him in his office. Eleanor Dulles, his sister, was in there with him. Dulles asked me to come in to his office. He was on the phone with Bob Taft, telling him how much he approved what the US government had done in Korea. He thought that we had made the United Nations a living, breathing organization and he approved heartily of the Truman-Acheson decision. I had come to tell him that the Secretary wanted to talk to him about something—I don't remember. So we walked back, which was quite a way around the fifth floor of the old State building. He told me the same thing that he had told Taft and I told him that I was delighted that he thought that way. He held that line for the first few weeks and then starting in the first week of December, 1950 he talked to a lot of reporters. Several of them called me—Mark Childs and others—to tell me that Dulles was now opposing the war and that he was saying that he never would have handled the crisis in that way. If he had been in charge, if he had anything at all, he would have used air power alone. I was furious. The story was confirmed by at least two press people.

In those days, we had a small Secretary's dining rook across from the Secretary's office. There was little protocol observed; the top staff could eat in it. One took a seat wherever it was vacant. A long table was left for the Secretary and no one, including me, would sit there unless invited to do so by the Secretary. Occasionally he brought outsiders in for lunch. Everybody else sat at any empty chair at the other tables. In any case, on the day I had received these newspaper reports, I went to the dining room and Dulles suggested that I sit with him. We were the only two at the table. I was already livid because I knew what he had said to press earlier, which was contrary to his views of a few



## Library of Congress

weeks before. I told him that I had so pleased when he returned from Japan supporting the Administration's Korean policy. I reminded him that he had told me that it had made the U.N. a living, breathing organization. I was so happy to have had his full support and endorsement. He didn't respond; he knew exactly what I was referring to. I did tell the press that Dulles had nothing to do with the development of the policy, but that contrary to what he was saying now, had given the policy his full endorsement and support and that he had never mentioned using air power alone. That was an example of my life with John Foster Dulles. He didn't like me; I didn't like him, but he realized that in terms of his operation, we were better off staying straight with each other. One day, he called me to his office and said: "I am sure you have heard the rumors that I am leaving". I said that indeed I had heard. He gave me draft press release that he wanted to issue and asked for my opinion. I said that it suffered from one problem: it was not true. The release said that he had been brought in only to work on the Japanese Peace Treaty; that work was now done and he was therefore leaving. I reminded him that at my insistence he had been given access to all the cable traffic that other senior Department officials received. I also reminded him that I had arranged for him to be included in the Austrian Peace Treaty meetings, the German issues and other matters. He knew perfectly well that I had seen him at these meetings and that I had heard him make remarks at each of these sessions. So he modified the release a little. He acknowledged that every once in a while he did other things besides the Peace Treaty. But he didn't want any responsibility for or contact with the Truman foreign policy record. He was afraid that any relationship might prevent him from becoming Secretary of State. So my days with Dulles were not particularly happy ones, but they were gutsy. It was a gutsy relationship. When Dulles was finally appointed Secretary, Acheson said to me: "If you have any idea of a long term career, you better get out of this office before inauguration. If you are still sitting here when Dulles comes in, you will be fired". I told him that wouldn't bother me at all, but I did move and became acting Special Assistant for Mutual Security Affairs for six months. After he was nominated, Dulles called me on the phone—he thought I was still Acheson's Executive Assistant—to tell me that he would very much like to have me stay on for a while. I told him: "Mr. Dulles,

## Library of Congress

that is very kind of you but I am scheduled to go to Denmark. In any case I am no longer in the Secretary's office". He asked whether I would come back for a short time at least. I told him that I had this other assignment that I would have to go to. He hadn't been sworn in yet and I got out of town in January or February, 1952. I have a lot of small memories of Dulles, which were sort of interesting.

The other appointments were key in a lot of ways. Jim Webb, who had very serious migraine headaches, was somewhat miscast as Under Secretary of State. He was a very fine fellow; I was very fond of him. But the substance of foreign affairs was not his main interest. He was a manager. He ran the mechanics of the building—he knew personnel and that sort of thing very well. He did that very well. He used to come in on some very good stuff sometimes—the firing of MacArthur, the firing of Louis Johnson, the Secretary of Defense—all those were things that Jim was involved in. The firing of Johnson was very hard, but had to be done because he was impossible to work with. Acheson and I went to the NATO meeting in Rome in October, 1951. During the trip, Acheson asked me who should replace Jim Webb. We sat and discussed various people. One was David Bruce. We wanted a career or semi-career person. Bruce had been in the Foreign Service as a politically appointee, but he had been in and out enough times to be considered as career. He was not politically active at all. So we finally agreed on Bruce. It didn't work quite as well as I hoped because Under Secretary is a very difficult job. But he was a lovely man to have around.

*Q: Tell us a little bit of the firing of MacArthur. How was the Secretary of State involved ?*

BATTLE: I don't know that this has ever been recorded. MacArthur was making a series of statements that were not American policy—threatening to bomb north of the Yalu River. The VFW statement that he made criticizing the Administration for holding back or word to that effect. He thought he could say anything. So he became increasingly difficult. A small number of people in the Department—Jim Webb, myself and Harriman—knew about it. Dean Acheson went to a meeting with the President and the Joint Chiefs. The

## Library of Congress

Chiefs were asked individually whether they approved of MacArthur being recalled. They all approved. Then we had to worry about the mechanics. We had trouble with phones in those days. We were trying to make phone calls to Japan. Frank Pace was in Japan at the time and we wanted him to take the message; we just didn't want it to arrive cold. I don't remember whether we found Frank, but it was a tense call. There were all sorts of speculations, even at high levels, whether MacArthur would actually return. Or if he returned, whether he would run for the Presidency. No one knew what to expect. I don't think that Truman had any alternative to the challenges from MacArthur. The General wanted to bomb above the Yalu. He wanted to bring China totally into the war—he was really dangerous. Everyone else was to achieve what we had gone in for and then get out—which we have never done even to this day. These were a very few difficult days. The course of the hearings started. I sat with Dean Acheson as we reconstructed every step of the way that led to the firing of MacArthur. It was very hard; it took us ten days. I tried to protect him from it so that it would not become an Acheson vs. MacArthur battle, but rather a US Government vs. MacArthur. Even though one might try to only honest judgements, one could get all mixed up. So we sat there. He said: “After we got the VFW statement, I called Averell”. I said: “No, Mr. Secretary, you didn't. I didn't even show you that telegram then. I called him”. Acheson said: “You called him?”. I said: ' Yes. I told him! I told him that we would have a meeting at nine o'clock the next morning on the MacArthur speech”. He finally agreed with me that perhaps that was the right series of sequences. That was the way we reconstructed the chains of events leading to the decision—we tried to think of all incidents that had any bearing on the subject. Of course, there was a sentimental outpouring for MacArthur and we took the position that he should be permitted to have his day of glory. There was never any attempt on our part to minimize MacArthur's contributions or to discredit him.. We would not comment on his firing; he could have his day of glory. MacArthur gave his speech to Congress including his famous phrase about “old soldiers”. There were phonograph records with people singing that famous phrase. That was quite a period.

## Library of Congress

*Q: Before we get to that, tell us a little about the relationship between the Secretary and CIA?*

BATTLE: At that time, CIA had not yet become the major actor that they would be later; the NSC had not yet been established. Gordon Arneson used to brief the Secretary on nuclear matters. He had various intelligence briefings, not all of which I attended. If it was on a subject that I thought I should be familiar with, I would participate, but mostly I didn't. Dean Acheson was accepted as the prime force in foreign affairs. He got along very well with most of the Cabinet officers, except Louis Johnson. Johnson was trying to cut back the Defense program at a time that we needed it. He was absolutely unethical. That was a bad relationship. The relationships we had with CIA were relatively few, certainly far fewer than they are today. The Agency would come in on big issues. I remember that in 1949 we had \$350 million dollars authorized for the China area—to support Chiang Kai-shek. We couldn't figure out what to do with the money. The Administration had not requested it; Congress had just appropriated it. We believed that there were things that we could and should do to bolster Chiang Kai-shek. So we had a meeting with CIA people and our Far East people. It was a large session; CIA started the meeting with an analysis which said that the Kuomintang had the strength to hold on in just a couple of the provinces, but were unlikely to fall to the Communists. CIA thought that they could survive. This was on a Friday afternoon. We agreed we would try ways to help the anti-communist groups to survive—but by Monday key resistance had collapsed. It was on subjects like that I got involved in. Shortly after I came to the Secretary's office, General Vaughn called from the White House. He was a great friend of the President. He told me that a memo was coming to the Secretary from the Department recommending Course "A". He said he thought that was wrong; he thought we should be following Course "B". I waited for the paper to arrive and then took it into the Secretary, briefed him on the content and told him that there was a difference of opinion between the Department and General Vaughn. Acheson asked for my opinion, which was to support the Department, but I told him he should consider Vaughn's objections. Then Acheson said: "Luke, don't ever tell me what General Vaughn

## Library of Congress

thinks or anyone else in the White House. Don't even talk to them. Don't have anything to do with them. If we want the White House involved, we'll speak to the President. Don't pay any attention to them". I don't know whether in fact it was quite that way, but that was Acheson's attitude.

There was no NSC staff of the magnitude that exists today which is outrageous. It is much too big—it has become another State Department or Defense Department. It is mainly duplication. They just redo what has already been done elsewhere. An Admiral was the Executive Secretary of what was then the NSC; nobody ever heard of him. All he did was process the papers. The NSC was created by Truman primarily to pull the Departments together on common issues. That is what the NSC did; it was not supposed to be another State Department. When Averell Harriman was appointed Director of Mutual Security—a job that had never existed—there would probably been some real resistance from Acheson had it been anyone else than Harriman. The relationship between the two was difficult in some ways, but Averell was a very decent man. I liked him very much. He said to me and others that he had known Dean Acheson for many, many years and that there wouldn't be any problems working together. And there wasn't; as a matter of fact, Harriman was quite useful to us on several occasions. He used to come to the Department for the 9:15 meeting and sometimes stayed for the later larger meeting as well. It was an interesting contrast. When in 1961 I returned to the Department as Executive Secretary and Special Assistant to Secretary Rusk, on my first day on the job, Dean Rusk said to me: "The White House is all over this building. Papers are going from here to there without going through the Seventh Floor. We don't know what is going on. Try to get a handle on it. You know those people at the White House". Well, I knew Arthur Schlesinger, McGeorge Bundy and a couple of the others. So I went to see Bundy and discussed the problem at some length. An NSC staffer would ask a desk officer for a memo which would be marched directly to the President. He would approve an action—the memo had never been staffed in the Department or reviewed by higher officials. The difference between 1950 and 1961 was very great. First the NSC staff had grown enormously.

## Library of Congress

The new zealots, the young squirts who were in the White House in 1961, each with his own agenda—it was a different world. We managed to get the situation under control; McGeorge Bundy was quite helpful. Rusk would never assert himself; he liked me to assert myself, but he didn't do it. He stayed above the fray. And there was a fray and someone had to join combat.

As long as we are discussing this period, I might as well proceed with some other comments about it. Chester Bowles was the Under Secretary. When I returned to Washington around the first of August, 1961 no telegrams had gone for several weeks. They were all stacked up awaiting action. Bowles didn't like to deal with telegrams. He felt he was there, as he said, to deal with “policy”. He didn't feel that he should have to approve telegrams. Rusk was spending most of this time then at the White House. So I started going through the telegrams and if they were routine and I understood them, there was nothing to it. A few times I would call an Assistant Secretary to make sure that I understood the substance of the messages. They were sometimes complicated and I wanted to assure myself that there weren't any nuances that I might not have caught. Most of the time, there weren't. So on the basis of that, I would sign off on them.

If there were difficult messages, such as the ones dealing with Iran, if the Secretary were absent, I would try to take the message into Bowles. The conversation with Bowles went usually like this and I saw him almost every day:

Bowles: “Luke, I am so glad to see you. Please sit down. I have been thinking about the plight of the brown people. We must take more notice of the brown people”.

Battle: “Yes, Chet (he insisted that every one call him Chet) but before we do that, I have a couple of important telegrams on Iran I need to discuss with you”.

## Library of Congress

Bowles: "O.K., but let's finish the other discussion first. I don't have time to worry about those things. The whole future of the browns (NOTE: that was a reference to the underdeveloped world, about which he deeply cared) is vital".

I was very fond of Bowles. I could have stayed in the office as long as I wanted to, but I had to get the telegrams out. So I would say: "I've got to get these messages out". And his answer invariably would be: "Do what ever you think is right".

Then Alex Johnson came in as Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, which helped a lot because then you had a seasoned professional to whom one could turn. Rusk and Bowles barely spoke to each other. Then there was George Ball, who succeeded Bowles—he worked on economic matters and was superb. Had he been Under Secretary earlier, the process would have been much smoother. Chet had a lot of marvelous instincts, but was not equipped to run a bureaucracy. He had been an advertising executive and an idea man, but couldn't handle the day-to-day activities that had to be taken care of. During the Rusk-Bowles administration, I tried my best to be the mediator. I never mentioned the feud—that is somewhat of an overstatement—to anyone, but it was widely known; it was in many papers. I told Bowles that he was making a mistake; if you wanted to be involved in a large problem, you go to the Secretary with a specific issue. You ask a specific question to which you want an answer; tell him the situation and give him some choices and give him your recommendations. You just don't go to the Secretary and generalize for two hours. So he tried that but reported that it wasn't working any better. Then the Secretary said to me: "Luke, you are trying to make something work that will never work". I told him that I was beginning to realize that and that I was bowing out as an intermediary. If the two wanted to communicate, they would have to do so directly. Shortly after that, Bowles left and Ball came in. Bowles had become very involved with the Indians and the Pakistanis and the problems of the Third World. After his Under Secretaryship, Bowles became Ambassador-at-Large for certain issues, including the plight of the Third World. Then he



## Library of Congress

became Ambassador to India once again. I was very fond of him, but it was very difficult to work under those circumstances.

Ball took over. He has continued to be one of my good and great friends. I liked him; he was very, very bright. He knew what had been going on. I told him that in light of the history of relationships, he and the Secretary should meet daily and I should not attend those sessions. He said that he didn't mind that at all. I told him that I didn't think the Secretary would, although I didn't have the same relationship with Rusk as I had had with Acheson. I went when Rusk and Bowles met, because that was necessary. I didn't do it with the Rusk-Ball meetings, unless specifically invited each time. They did meet at least daily. They used to do late in the day and had a drink. I didn't feel that I needed to attend those sessions; I was not in the middle; Rusk and Ball could communicate well together and needed to do so; my presence was not really required.

*Q: We have now finished your assignment in the Secretary Acheson's office. Then you went to Denmark.*

BATTLE: I went there as first secretary in the Political Section. I felt that I just couldn't stay around the Department with John Foster Dulles as Secretary. I could have used my acquaintance with Dulles if I had wanted to get me another assignment, but I didn't want to do that. When his appointment was announced, I knew it was time for me to leave the Department or work out some other assignment. I cast around; I went to see Carl Humelsine, who was then in charge of administration in the Department. There was no designee for the political job in Copenhagen to replace Charlie O'Donnell who was leaving. That job sounded about right for me.

Denmark was lovely. It was a marvelous country, but being first secretary of an Embassy of the size of Copenhagen was not rich enough for my blood. I didn't care about the rank, but I cared about the substance. There wasn't much to write about. I had a pleasant couple of years during which I felt I was totally out of the swim of things. We had a



## Library of Congress

marvelous time; it was not an unhappy tour, but I also didn't feel particularly productive. During one of the last dinners we had arranged for Dean Acheson before his retirement, John Ferguson and I and some of his old time admirers and friends were sitting around discussing the "good old days". Acheson said: "The best thing for all of you to do with the Republicans coming in, is have a fallow period. Be like the plants. When something happens, someone will tell you. Don't read The New York Times from cover to cover every day. Have a fallow period and get rested for the next round". That was a marvelous bit of advice which I kept remembering when I was in Denmark.

Then I went to Paris for a year as part of the NATO staff. We had a lovely apartment overlooking the Eiffel Tower. But I had the same problem in NATO as I had had in Denmark. I was the Deputy Executive Director, but I didn't have enough to do. I had known Lord Ismay slightly; he wanted a senior American in NATO. Bob Barnes was moving on; he had been the senior American on his staff. I had been requested twice for some jobs in the Department, but personnel had insisted in each occasion that it be approved by Dulles because I had been so close to Acheson. That infuriated me when I heard about these events. I never felt that I had any partisan political connections. I was a Democrat, but that never had anything to do with my appointments. I worked for Acheson as a Civil Servant and I considered myself as a career appointee.

After a while in Paris, I got a letter from Carl Humelsine, who by then had become the President of the Williamsburg Foundation saying that he was going to London for an award ceremony for Churchill—the Williamsburg Award. So I went to London and told them that I didn't really have a job and that I wouldn't stay in Paris just to be in Paris. Just before this event, Dean and Alice Acheson had come to Paris and stayed with us in our apartment for five days. We had a marvelous time. We gave a cocktail party in their honor to which Lord Ismay and others came. I had told Acheson that I was not occupied. So Dean asked Lord Ismay how I was getting along. Lord Ismay replied that I was absolutely indispensable. He was impressed by the fact that I was in the office before he came in and was there when he left at night. He thought that I worked too hard. So Acheson came back to me and said:

## Library of Congress

"I don't understand what you are complaining about". So I said: "Dean, in the first place, Lord Ismay comes to work at 10:30 in the morning, then goes out to lunch a one, then has a little snooze, returns to the office about 4:30 and then stays another half an hour. So I am there before him and don't leave until after he does. That is why Lord Ismay thinks I work so hard, but I don't really!".

That really became a problem. So I left the Service and went to work for the Williamsburg Foundation for four and half years. It was a big change, but a very pleasant one. But I was too young to be doing that. I was only in my mid-thirties at that point. I had a few chances to leave and do other things, but I enjoyed Williamsburg. I became very fond of the Rockefellers—Winthrop, for example. I used to go to stay at his estate in Little Rock. I was not totally unhappy, but I still thought I was not at the center of action. Nothing much was happening in my life and I didn't like that. I was in Williamsburg until the Kennedy era started.

I forgot exactly what started the next career move. I returned to the Department as Executive Secretary in 1961 and promised to stay there for at least a year. I was pledged to get Dean Rusk going and then I planned to move to something else. I re-Wristonized back into the Foreign Service. I had decided that I was going to stay in the Service. So George Ball asked me what job I would be interested in. I told him I would like to be the Assistant Secretary for Cultural Affairs which was then being vacated. That was the only job which I requested in all my years. Ball said I could have Morocco as ambassador, but I didn't want to leave Washington at that time. He asked whether I would be interested in the Deputy Administrator job in AID or the Deputy Under Secretary for Management job in State (that is now the Under Secretary for Management position). Ball told me that I could have any of the ones he mentioned. I told him that I would prefer Cultural Affairs. He thought I was a little wacky. It was more than just culture; Jack Kennedy was the President and it looked very exciting. So I went to CU and stayed there for two years.

*Q: What did you do as Assistant Secretary?*

## Library of Congress

BATTLE: A was very busy. I spent a lot of time on the Hill, with the scholars, with various programs, the teachers, the leaders, the performing arts, etc. We had to establish procedures, select the performing artists; that was an awful problem. I was the US representative to UNESCO. I also wanted to re-organize the Bureau along geographic lines and I wanted some good Foreign Service people. I didn't think they would come just to grant scholarships to students. But they might be interested in cultural diplomacy.

We had to get the money appropriated every year. The committees would beat on us for a while but we had to go through that process. That was not very pleasant. But that was one of the things I did which oddly enough changed the direction of my career. I did a lot of testifying before Committees of Congress. The first time or two, I was scared to death. Then I got accustomed to it and I began to like it, which is a horrible thing to say, but true. I called on a lot of the Congressmen and Senators and began to know a lot of them. The cultural program had been in a lot of trouble in Congress and I was trying to improve the fractured relationships that existed. So I made a practice of spending two afternoons every week to visit Congressmen and in time I built up quite a group of friends. I had very good luck with my testimony. The word apparently spread on the Hill that I was alright. Increasingly, if the Department had a problem that didn't fall directly in one jurisdiction or another, I would be asked to use my good offices on the Hill. For example, the AID appropriations fell in this category. They would give me a long list of Senators and Congressmen they wanted me to touch base with. I would be brought in to assist on the Congressional issues. This had something to do with my later assignment to Egypt.

We had large exchange programs, scholarships for American and foreign students. We had American specialists going abroad on lecture tours. We had UNESCO work. The Assistant Secretary job was heavily administrative. We had problems of utilizing all the foreign currency that might have been available. At that time, we had about seven countries which had surplus foreign currency, generated by the sale of agricultural goods

## Library of Congress

through the PL 480 program. We were trying to do what we could to spend these excess currencies. That avoided using dollars.

I was Chairman of the US delegation to UNESCO one year. I enjoyed that. UNESCO was in trouble then; of course, it got into a lot more later. There was a good argument to be made for leaving the organization when we did. It was a very messy situation. I do think that by now UNESCO has sufficiently improved that we could renew our membership. We don't want a major international organization like that without an American presence. I notice that we have just announced that we will not return and I suppose that will last for another year or two. Maybe one day we will return. In any case, I enjoyed the CU job very much and I was very happy there. I should mention one function of CU which still today has some repercussions. Bobby Kennedy was Attorney General and he, for some reason, took great interest in our programs. He became very unhappy that we did not spend enough time with young people around the world, particularly those that one day might become the leaders of their countries. So he made me start a Youth Committee, which was an inter-agency committee, including Defense which had one of the largest foreign student programs—for young officers—in the country. We also had AID, CIA, USIA and all the agencies that dealt in this general field. We would meet approximately every six weeks. Kennedy had a germ of an idea of some significance. I don't know whether in the final analysis the Youth Committee did anything or not; there was a lot of paper generated and a lot of talk. I still hear about that initiative. Some one called me recently to ask me to review the history of that Committee. It had certain standing at the time, primarily because Bobby Kennedy was interested in it. He was difficult to work with, particularly when his brother was President, but that continued even into the Johnson era. But I liked him; I became rather fond of him. Everybody was scared of him; I wasn't and I would argue with him. But he was difficult to deal with. He would neither read or listen. When you have someone like that, it is hard to communicate with them. So he was an experience, to put it mildly. He would always come to the meetings, scream and yell about everybody and ask why Ed Murrow, who was then head of USIA, wasn't present. It was a bit too vigorous

## Library of Congress

for me. But the Kennedy policy of encouraging young potential leaders lasted, not only in Washington, but also overseas, where they were called “spotted leaders”—not because they had spots on them, but because they had been “spotted” as potential leaders of their countries. That term seemed terribly funny at the time—to have “spotted leaders” meetings—, but a real effort was made to bring Embassies in touch with the youth of their countries. Much of it was pure gobbledygook, but some had real substance. Here and there, I thought the Youth Committee did some interesting work and developed some worthwhile programs. For example, it changed the direction of the leaders' program. That program was in existence, but we placed an emphasis on youth and on scholarships. The leaders' program did a lot of good. When I was in Cairo, I sent Anwar Sadat to the US on one of those programs. He and his wife came that way for their first visit to the United States. I think that visit made a fundamental difference to Sadat's point of view. It also helped us to become very good friends.

One day, Tom Stern, from Bill Crockett's office, came to see me. I was in a meeting and he asked that I be called out. He asked me whether I would be interested in going to Egypt. I asked: “What for?”. He said: “To be Ambassador, you nut!”. I was very surprised, but I told him I would consider it and that I found the idea rather interesting. I had been approached about several other posts previously, but I had not been in any hurry to leave CU. After the assassination of President Kennedy, my enthusiasm for the work changed. I found it very difficult to relate to President Johnson's White House and that included the President himself, although in all honesty I must say that he was never anything but polite and civil to me. But I always felt a little uncertain. I don't know who first thought of the idea, but I would guess it was George Ball. I have never been sure. Ralph Dungan, when he was in the Kennedy White House, asked me if I wanted to go overseas to be an Ambassador. I told him that I had never said that to anybody. He said that everyone kept suggesting my name for one Ambassadorship or another. I told him that I was quite content in my then assignment. I really wasn't interested in going abroad; I had been approached about the Philippines, Mexico and other spots. I had turned all down, but

## Library of Congress

Cairo sounded more interesting than the others. I also couldn't see myself staying in CU for much longer under Lyndon Johnson. It was becoming very difficult for me and so I was ready to go out of town. But it didn't quite work that way. State's ambassadorial nomination practice included letters to key Congressional members, including Senator Fulbright, who was then chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and a very good friend. These letters were sent a little before "agr#ment" is requested from the foreign government. This gave this committee chairmen an opportunity to object. I had warned the Department's Congressional office that there might be some opposition to my nomination, especially from Fulbright. He had been very pleased with the way CU had functioned. He felt that it had become an integral part of the Department and was making greater contribution than before. He was very pleased. It just happened that I already had an appointment to call on him about CU. It was scheduled for the morning of the day when he was to receive the Department's notice about my appointment to Cairo. I saw him about 10:00 a.m. and I told him what was going on. He didn't get indignant with me; he was perfectly pleasant. I thought we had gotten over a potential road-block and that I would go to Cairo after all. When I returned to State, Kay Folger of the Congressional Office and responsible for my Congressional relations—she was very, very good—,caught in me in the hall. She knew that "agr#ment" was going to be requested of the Egyptian government. She told me that Fulbright had become quite upset and had called George Ball. Ball then asked me to come to see him. He told me of Fulbright's call and I told him that everything would be alright in time, but that it would be a problem in the short run. So Ball called John Badeau, who was then our Ambassador in Cairo. In fact, Ball got him as he was driving to the Foreign Ministry to seek the "agr#ment". That was a small miracle in itself in those days—to reach anyone by telephone in Cairo. He told Badeau not go to the Foreign Ministry and to hold up the agr#ment request.

Then several interesting things happened. Bill Fulbright had put his foot down. He told me that he would not let me go to Cairo until the Department nominated someone for CU I would consider satisfactory and vouch for. I pointed out that I did not appoint Assistant

## Library of Congress

Secretaries; that that was a Presidential prerogative with which I had nothing to do. He said that I could make some suggestions and that I must find someone who was as good as I was. Unless that happened he would not approve my appointment to Egypt. That put me in an extremely awkward position. Moreover, Bill Fulbright was enjoying this little game. He proceeded to tell two or three members of the press—William White, Walter Lippmann and Joe Kraft, I think— what he was up to. Fortunately, they were all friends and called me to tell me the story. That was the beginning of the great Administration feud with Fulbright. Until that point, there had not been any friction. I didn't want the story in the press; I was very nervous about that. I asked the press people not to print the story, please. It would only have created problems for me and I told them I would appreciate it if they didn't carry the story. They didn't. You will recall that Johnson at this time was very sensitive about leaks and would change his mind just to make the “leak” a lie. That is what concerned me and made me very, very nervous.

Ball asked me to make some suggestions for CU. Ball was making most of the personnel decision at this time. So I went through all sorts of names. I would call Fulbright and tell him that I have a good candidate. He would say: “He doesn't sound so good! I don't know him”. There was always some kind of excuse. It was a very awkward situation. Ben Read, who was then the Executive Secretary of the Department, came up with the name Harry McPherson. Harry was a great choice. He was then in the Department of the Army as a senior civilian official. Coming to State would have been a promotion for him. The best part of the idea was that Harry was interested and that Fulbright, who knew him slightly, thought it was great. It was the first time he had gotten enthusiastic about anybody. He approved Harry becoming Assistant Secretary. So Harry spoke to the President; I don't remember how we handled it with the White House, although everybody knew what was happening. Ralph Dungan, Bundy and my other friends were aware of the situation. One problem was that Harry was supposed to move to the White House staff, but he preferred the CU job. He got the President to promise him that if he took the CU job, that the President would leave him alone. So when the CU problem was solved I was able to



## Library of Congress

leave to go to Cairo. I went through the confirmation hearings, Fulbright was very nice and we have remained friends for these many years.

In this period of suspense, a lot of people were finding out what was going on and for nine weeks—the period between when the agreement was supposed to have requested and the time it actually was—, I kept getting calls. There were a number of people who were eager to get the Cairo job. One was a fellow by the name of Bill Polk. He called me up and told me that he knew the secret that I was supposed to go to Cairo. He said he thought that was a marvelous idea. In fact he didn't because he wanted the job himself and tried to get it. He should have known better. He approached good friends of mine on the Hill and asked for their support for his nomination. He thought he could get Frank Church's support, but Frank told him that he was friend of mine, that he understood that I was supposed to go to Cairo and that as far as he was concerned, if I wanted the job, I would have his full endorsement. I thought that was very decent of Church. He told me all about it. I realized that Polk was making the rounds of Congress, thinking that this was the way to get an appointment. It might have worked at some other time, but it wasn't the proper strategy for this particular time and position. He was trying to knife me in the back and I didn't appreciate it. But it didn't work.

So we prepared to go to Cairo. I recently made a speech to the DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired) group and told them that my appointment was the kind that all Foreign Service officers should fight. I was not prepared to go to Cairo as Ambassador; I had not served in the Middle East. But it enabled the President to say to Congress and to the Senate particularly that he was sending out some one well known to them who had fresh eyes and mind, who was not an old "Arabist". The new man could review everything. The President wanted to keep the aid program going and the White House thought that my review would help that. I don't think that one person makes that much difference to historical trends or to what really happens, but at any rate I did go to Cairo.



## Library of Congress

During the first few weeks we were in Cairo, we had a lot of problems. About the week I arrived, a new aid bill was being considered by Congress which included a very large PL 480 program for Egypt. Senator Gruening of Alaska was on the aid subcommittee dealing with this program. He had an assistant who was extremely pro-Israeli. The Senator had absolutely no interest in the issue whatsoever and would do whatever the staffer asked him to do. So a rider was attached to the bill saying that there would be no more aid to Egypt until it got out of Yemen. That was not exactly welcome news to the Egyptians and it happened during my first week in Cairo. That problem was followed by the burning of the American library in the Embassy compound. That was a dramatic event and has been much discussed. I was still making my calls. This was on Thanksgiving or about two months after I arrived. All Embassies had received alerts from the Department advising that there could be trouble in connection with the Congo issues. There were large numbers of black students in Cairo and elsewhere. The Egyptians had made an effort to have large number of African students in order to try to increase its influence in the continent. So US Embassy Cairo was an obvious target. I received this alert over Thanksgiving weekend. I read the instructions which said if a building was ever invaded and could not be defended, even if files were in danger, the Marines should not fire. They were to use fire-arms in only very circumscribed circumstances. On Thanksgiving Day, I read the President's proclamation at the English church in Cairo. We drove home after service, passing the Embassy compound. All was quiet since it was a holiday. We had dinner about 2 p.m. I settled down with a brandy and my children were playing chess with some of their friends. I had let my car go, which was a blessing. The phone rang; it was the Marine guard saying that the compound was under attack. There were people all over the place throwing bricks, tearing up the flower pots and in general rampaging. The Marine asked whether I could come. I asked him whether I could get through and he thought that I could. So I walked, since my car and driver had long left. It was not a long walk, so I went. I put on a raincoat since it was a chilly evening. I told Surri, the majordomo, to pull down all the blinds, to lock up and not anyone into the house, to lock all the gates and to prepare for possible trouble.

## Library of Congress

I walked to the Embassy and it was a disastrous situation. In order to get there, I had to pass both the fire and police departments buildings. In neither case, did I see any activity. I passed these buildings and went to the Embassy. As I arrived, the flowerpots were being thrown right into the building, right into my office. The Marine barracks were on fire as was the library. I walked very slowly and the mob let me go through. The Marines were all lined up behind the door; I could see them. They yelled at me to run, but I thought that if I did that, I would be killed. So I walked through the crowd; I pushed one guy who stood in the way, aside. The crowd waited long enough for the gate to swing open so I could get through. Then it went back to rioting again. Now it seems the funniest thing in the world. I wasn't quite sure what to do; I asked each Marine to take a fire extinguisher of which we had a number. I took one, although I had never used one in my life, and headed for the library fire. By the time we got there, it was a gigantic blaze. There wasn't anything we could do; we couldn't even get close enough. Unfortunately, that fire was so spectacular, as the photographs taken at the time will show, that every article written in the next six months in the US included mention and pictures of it. The burning of US libraries was common problem in those days. The articles would use the Cairo's burning as an example; LIFE included the pictures in one of its editions; a lot of publications did. Every time there was a fire at any post, the Cairo library pictures were used as an illustration, because they were the best pictures available. The stories might be general in nature or about an event somewhere else, but the pictures were always that of our fire. I stayed up all night at the Embassy; the police and the fire departments finally showed up, unnecessarily late. I think the Egyptians were embarrassed; they didn't know what to do about the incident. The Chief of Police came to the Embassy after things had calmed down to ask whether I was alright. I told him that I was okay and that was about the extent of that conversation. I showed him the damage. By that time, the mob had broken up. If the Egyptians had done more immediately, the press might have reported it differently. If they had apologized or committed themselves to compensation for the building damage, that would have made a big difference. But they didn't do that. Ultimately, after many weeks, they did the right

## Library of Congress

things. As we pieced the story together, it was apparently a mob of African students who were protesting the Congo developments—the US airlift out of the Congo.

The next day, I went to protest the absence of appropriate protection and the slow response by the police and fire departments. The Foreign Office became very indignant that I protested; they didn't respond; they didn't apologize. They expressed regrets that the incident had occurred, which wasn't satisfactory. So we had a mess. In a few days, I received instructions to see Nasser. It was probably the first substantive appointment I had with him. I had presented my credentials, but that purely ceremonial. We met alone in his residence on the outskirts of Cairo and he said to me: "You are very young to be the American Ambassador". I looked younger than I really was. I replied: "You are very young to be President. We are exactly the same age and you have done a lot better than I have". He laughed; he thought that was very funny. After that, he would often laugh and we used to laugh together. He expressed his deep regret; he said he would give a thousand books in his own name for the library and he would give us a new building to be selected. I don't think the Egyptians ever intended for the riot to occur, but they had given a permit for the demonstration. So they knew that there would be a demonstration. Whether they knew how far it might go, I don't know, but they knew that there would be a demonstration. That was not very helpful. Eventually, the building that they gave us right near the residence became a better library than the one we had because it was in a better location—one didn't have to enter the Embassy compound to get to it. The new location was near the Corniche and close to the Nile Hotel, so that it was very convenient. The session with Nasser was very useful; had the Egyptians reacted earlier, it would have been better for all concerned. My meeting with Nasser occurred on December 18, 1964. I dealt with a number of subjects with him on that day and had a lengthy discussion with him. Neither he or I knew that while I was there in his office, an American plane was shot down over the area. I didn't find out until much later in the evening. There was a performance of an American play at the American University of Cairo that evening. I took the family to the play. When we came home, Surri told me that the Embassy had been calling frantically

## Library of Congress

trying to get hold of me. So I called and knew that something serious had happened. I had the car take me to the Embassy and was told that an American plane had been shot down.

There were a lot of factors in that incident. They didn't all come together at one time, but I can now say—although I didn't know it at the time—that although we thought at the time that two Americans had been shot down, actually it was one American and one Swede. There were in a remote part of the desert, hard to reach. We had no contact with Egyptian government. The senior officials either didn't return telephone calls or would talk to me if at all possible. They knew exactly what was going on. I couldn't talk to anybody; I wanted to send someone out to the wreck to examine the situation and account for the people in the plane. In retrospect, it appears that John Mecom, who was a great friend of the President Johnson, owned the plane—it was an old flying box-car from World War II. It was supposed to fly from Amman, Jordan to Benghazi, Libya to pick up detergents. Don't ask me why they needed to get detergents there. But apparently, this trip had been made several times. It was supposed to be a routine flight. The flight plan had been filed. But when the plane took off, it had trouble with the landing gear and returned to the field. The tower, which had sent out messages to the Egyptians and everybody else about the flight plan, thought that therefore the flight had been canceled. But the plane was fixed and took off without telling the tower that it was going to fly the original plan. So no one on the route knew that the plane was in fact coming. So the plane flew close to the Cairo airport. Unfortunately, the Israelis had been using the same kind of plane for early warning and intelligence gathering purposes. The Egyptians had protested and had complained about it. So they were alert to this kind of plane. Since they had not been warned of this flight, they mistook the American plane for the Israeli one. All of this we found out subsequently; at the time we knew very little of this background. When the American plane crossed into Egyptian air space, the Egyptians sent a couple of fighter planes to intercept it and to order it to land. The American did not respond, but apparently did make it appear that it was going to land. In fact they did begin to land, but when they thought they had lost the fighter planes, they took off again only to be picked up by the fighters again and shot down.

## Library of Congress

The American and the Swede were killed. The bodies laid on the ground for many hours without anyone verifying who had been killed. I tried to get through to the Foreign Minister at least to get verification of the dead. It was a very unpleasant situation. What made it even worse was that it was two or three days before the Egyptians did anything. When the FAA came out later, the Egyptians were quite cooperative. They gave FAA the tapes which showed what efforts had been made to get the plane to land. The whole incident seemed perfectly explainable after the whole story had been told, but it didn't at the beginning. So John Mecom sent his representative to see us. The widow of the American pilot who was pregnant and very upset—a very difficult woman whom I didn't meet, but was fully briefed on—was threatening to commit suicide. She was in a hotel room when she heard about the incident. We got two or three wives of American officials to stay with her to make sure that she wouldn't commit suicide. It was a terribly unpleasant situation.

During this same period, Dr. Stino, the Minister of Supply, was having troubles. He was concerned that the burning of the library would result in a reduction of American aid. He also wanted to increase the aid before the end of the calendar year because a new law was going into effect January 1, 1965 which would have required the use of American ships for transportation of goods and food stuffs paid by American aid. That was going to cost the Egyptians a lot of money and Dr. Stino was anxious to avoid as much of that cost as possible by getting as much of the aid as he could before the end of the year. It is impossible in the last week of December to get any one in Washington to increase aid, much less under the circumstances and the reasons I have described. Around December 20, Dr. Stino asked me to call him on him. I told Ed Moline, who was the Economic Counselor and Bill Boswell, the D.C.M. that I thought I should not go. They disagreed. They pointed out that he was also the Deputy Prime Minister and a very senior member of the Cabinet. They thought I had to make the call. I was firm that I would not talk to him about his request and we agreed that I would tell him that this was not an opportune time to talk about aid increases. The bodies were still in Egypt as were the lawyers and the widow in the hotel. But I went to see Dr. Stino. I thought the Egyptians were being very

## Library of Congress

uncooperative on the shooting down of the American plane. They had not even confirmed who the dead were—this was two or three days after the shooting incident. I was quite rough with Dr. Stina. I was served some orange juice, but didn't stay for coffee—that was a signal of how upset we were. Sometime the orange juice and coffee came together, sometime sequentially. As I understood the rules, as long as you took something, that met the requirement. So I had the orange juice and told the Minister that there was no point in discussing his request in light of the plane shooting and the Egyptian foot-dragging. I was abrupt; I should not have gone. My judgment was better than the staff's. I should have postponed to a later date, but Stino was eager to see me because the end of the year was rapidly approaching. In any case, Stino became very upset with what I said. What I didn't know at the time and only found out weeks later was that the Minister had been very upset by both the library burning and the plane incident because he was afraid that we would cut off aid entirely. He even had sent a memorandum to Ali Sabri, the Prime Minister and very pro Russian—he was considered a communist. I don't know whether that was true or not, but he was certainly the most pro-Russian official in the Egyptian government. This memorandum suggested that a certain amount of money be set aside in case aid were to be cut off or in case the additional aid were not forthcoming. What Stino was trying to point out is that there might be a huge foreign currency shortfall which had not been expected. President Nasser made a speech on December 23 and Ali Sabri rode with him on the train to Isma'iliya, I think. The Prime Minister was briefing the President and to be present was a very senior Russian—Chalepin. Nasser was seeing troubles on all sides. This was right after the fall of Khrushchev. One of the reasons given by the Russian for this event was contained in a memorandum that was floating around Europe. Allegedly Khrushchev had misused his authority to give honors and awards to people without Presidium approval. Chalepin was riding with Nasser on the train to this award ceremony where Nasser would make a speech. The Prime Minister took the occasion to tell the President that I had been extremely rude to Stino—I had not been rude, just abrupt. Nasser was told that I had refused to drink coffee; that I had threatened to cut off all aid—which was absolutely a lie—I had only mentioned the difficulty of getting additional aid

## Library of Congress

under present circumstances). Nasser got madder and madder at me and the Americans; he wanted to impress Chalepin with his how anti-American he could be. With that build up, he made his great “Drink the water of the sea” speech. That is what led to it. It was a devastating situation for me to deal with. There was so much going on, so many events in such brief time, that it was very detrimental to US-Egypt relations and to the continuation of aid.

The Department of State was quite upset with me and I was upset with them. They released a big tonnage of wheat. I thought that this was not the time to stir up the press by discussing assistance to Egypt in light of the recent events. The release was made in early January even though there was no special requirement to do so at that moment. I thought it was a mistake to release the wheat at this particular juncture. The American press had gone wild after the shooting down of the plane and the burning of the library. It was a very sensitive public relations moment. But the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in the Department—and I admired their guts in a way—decided to release the wheat. That was just as provocative as it could be. The Congress, the press, everybody wanted to stop the shipments until the two incidents had been sufficiently clarified. Congress wanted to hold hearings and the Department was concerned because I would have to testify. So Kay Folger thought up the idea of bringing me back to Washington for Inaugural weekend, knowing full well that no one would have time for me then. So I came back for the Inauguration. Just before leaving Cairo, I told the Egyptian government that I was returning for consultation. This became known to Mohammed Heikal, an Egyptian editor whom I had met only once soon after my arrival at a small dinner party given in Betty and my honor. At the advice of the Embassy staff, we had decided that each embassy section chief would host a small party for its primary contacts to meet the Battles. At the Bergus dinner, which was scheduled for 8:30, the Heikals who had been invited had not shown up by 9:30. So we went into dinner because this was a common problem in Cairo. We had already taken our seats and started to eat when the Heikals showed up. So all the seating was juggled around again to accommodate the late comers. I met him after dinner,, when



## Library of Congress

he asked me whether I had spent any time in the Middle East. I replied in the negative. He then asked whether I spoke any Arabic. I again said : "No". He then said : "Thank God!". He then asked whether I had any special expertise in the area. I said: "None". He then said: "Thank God!" again. I told him that I didn't fully understand; that I felt very deficient because of my lack of Middle East experience. He said: "Let me tell you something. The Americans who think they speak Arabic don't really speak Arabic. When they start, they begin to think that they can put themselves in our place and think and feel they way we do. We don't understand ourselves; how can an American possibly do so?". I laughed and told him that he made me feel much better because now all that was left was for me to be myself and not pretend to be an Egyptian and that was much easier for me. He said: "That is exactly what you should do". He added that he had not much to do with the Embassy. He didn't like John Badeau. He became one of my closest friends as time went on and helped me in a lot of ways.

In any case, just before I was to return to Washington, Mohammed Heikal called and said he would like to have an appointment. So I invited him for dinner. It was just the two of us at dinner. He took one sip of the soup and immediately remarked: "You have changed chefs". When I admitted we had, he noted that the soup was much better. He looked at our modern paintings, very interesting combination of modern painters, and he noted that the house looked so much better. He said that he hadn't been in the residence very much. I noted that from his comments, I thought that he would like to be invited more often and have some serious discussion from time to time. He said that he would like that very much. I told him that was fine with me if the following rules were followed: first, since he had bragged all over town that all Ambassadors were calling him—I had not—and that he had kept the British Ambassador waiting for forty-five minutes—that was not about to happen to me and I had therefore not called on him, I told him that I aware of his power, but that he was not the government to which I was accredited and that therefore my conversations with him were not a substitute for my dialogue with the government. Second, although he wrote a column that was widely read throughout the Arab world, I would not comment on

## Library of Congress

any of his writings. I told him that the columns he had written about the United States since my arrival had been awful, but that I was not going to be involved in arguing everything that I objected to. I was of course concerned that if I had failed to take exception to one column or another, he would assume my assent. As far as I was concerned, all of his columns were bad, but I was not going to argue each issue with him. But I told him that I would discuss any issue that he wanted to raise. The last rule was that if my confidence was violated, that would be the end of our dialogue. If he wanted to use anything I might have said, he would have to ask me first and I would say either “Yea” or “Nay”. He agreed to all the terms and that was the beginning of a very fruitful relationship.

At this first private dinner, he put together for me the whole story of Nasser's speech in which he attacked me. He told me all about the Prime Minister's position, Chapelin's presence and what had transpired on that train ride as I described it earlier. He is the one who put the whole story together and in perspective. We talked at length about all the incidents. He told me about the permits for the demonstrations and the burning of the library. During my three years in Cairo, I had regular contacts with Heikal. We had a standing invitation to go to his house in the country on Friday, which was their weekly holiday. He would call me every Thursday and ask me whether I would visit him the next day. If I said “yes”, he would then ask me whom I had seen that week. I would tell him. He then would say: “But you haven't seen Sadat, have you?”. If I replied in the negative, he would say that he would invite the Sadats. I told him that would be fine. I didn't go every Friday, but I went many times. He would consult with me on whom I needed to see and then would invite them. The Egyptians were all scared to death of him and would certainly never refuse his invitation. He warned me several times of the consequences of some actions that we had taken. For example, when we refused to release more wheat, which was headline news in Cairo every day, he called me—I would never call him, but I would go to his house. He would call me and ask tell me that he needed to see me right away. I would accommodate him. In the wheat situation, he warned me that the government had just decided to ask the Russians to divert any ships that might be on the high seas with

## Library of Congress

food stuffs on board to send them to Egypt. He thought that was going to be embarrassing for us and suggested that we prepare a statement that could be released as soon as the government's decision was made public. So we were ready when it happened. We even had time to clear with Washington by phone. That was the kind of thing he did for us.

I had told him that despite all these anti-American incidents, I would not hide and would continue to play my role as I would have under normal circumstances. No low profile. I was determined that I was not going to knuckle under to Egyptian public pressure. I told Heikal that. Some people thought that we should not fly the flag, that we should try to minimize the risks of attack from the students. I was not going to change our normal pattern of behavior. Heikal said: "I admire your courage". So I asked him why he didn't help us. I asked him to stop writing the terrible stuff he was writing about the US. He did so for a little bit more than a year; he didn't write a negative word about us. During that year, I came to know Nasser much better; I saw him several times. Heikal knew all about these meetings; I assume they had been taped because he once noted that Nasser and I laughed a lot together. I never told him I was going to see Nasser nor told him about any forthcoming meetings with Nasser. I didn't want Heikal to run ahead of me to tell Nasser what I was going to raise, but he knew all about the meetings after they took place. So that was my life as Ambassador to Egypt for over three years. Heikal was extremely honest with me. One day, during the last six months of my tour in Cairo, he called me and said he wanted to see me. I did and he said to me in a very unusual manner: "You have had a great impact on me". I replied, "You still think exactly what you thought when I first got here".

"No", he said, " You have had an impact. You have kept me from writing negative stories". I told him that I had never told him what to write. "yes", he said," but your efforts to rebuild our country's relationships"—and we had done a lot of things particularly along cultural performing arts, which were attended by the Cabinet—"makes it look like we are the best of friends. Every time I start to write a negative article, I see your face. That blocks me from writing what I really want. I don't think I can go on like that. I must start writing again

## Library of Congress

about the United States”. I said: “Mohammed, you write what you have to. I do what I have to do; you have to do what you have to do”. He subsequently wrote two columns about me. Then he started a series on US-Egyptian relations and he began by saying the same things he had said to me; namely that he had refrained from commenting on US-U.A.R. relations because he had admired the U.S. Ambassador and his efforts to improve those relationships. But, he wrote, that he had been derelict in not writing on those relationships. He then proceeded to write a series of five or six columns, which were very negative. When I left, he wrote a column that was really something; oddly enough that column—and I didn't know that until later—is now included in all the Arab textbooks used in the US—in the Foreign Service Institute, at the John Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS). After retiring, I headed the SAIS Foreign Policy Institute and the teacher who taught Arabic came to see me, astonished that in the textbooks she had just received included this old column about me. The other thing that happened on that column was that Yacub Khan, now Pakistan's Foreign Minister, a very interesting and learned Ambassador when he was in Washington, called me when I was senior Vice-President at COMSAT and said: “I am studying Arabic and I have just done a translation of a column that Heikal had written. It made me want to meet and talk with you. I would like a verification of my translation”. I told him that I couldn't help because I didn't speak Arabic. He asked whether I didn't have translation that the Embassy might have done. I told him that I thought that I might have that. So we met for lunch at the Jockey Club and he read my version. That was the start of a very warm friendship. He was one of the best foreign representatives that I have seen operate in Washington.

In any case, back to Egypt. We suspended all assistance in light of the strains on US-U.A.R. relations caused by the incidents I mentioned earlier. We wouldn't release the rest of the wheat—about \$33 million worth. The Congress forced the Department's hand. I don't know if things would have been different if we had released the wheat by the end of the year as the Egyptians had wanted. When the real facts became known about the library burning and the shooting down of the plane, it was too late for the press. It had lost

## Library of Congress

interest in the stories. The fact that Nasser gave us a new building for the library made Page 32 of The New York Times. The burning of the library was of course front page material. The lesson is that if an event is not followed soon thereafter by some other event, you lose any media that you might get. Fortunately, after a long period of time, we got a waiver and an extension, so that we could release the wheat. That was followed by another sale. I had a somewhat different concept from that which AID had used. We used to have agreements lasting three years. Then it was all over until the next round. I didn't think that was the right approach. I felt that we couldn't continue with assistance unless the climate was conducive to get Congressional approval. Nasser thought he was doing us a favor since he was relieving us from having to store the grains. I thought we needed a process that would continue negotiations all the time—I wanted a continuous process to remind the Egyptian government that it had to maintain a reasonable political climate if it hoped to receive new assistance. I wanted to negotiate for agreements that would only last six months or a year each. That would continually remind the Egyptians the benefits of a reasonable US-Egypt relationship. A three year span was just too long to keep the pressure on; it permitted them to say and do what ever they wanted in the interval. We did extend the basic agreement for six months at a value of \$50 million.

During the period when assistance was not forthcoming, Nasser didn't speak about the United States. When I saw Nasser, I would go to his office outside of town, with whatever instruction I had from Washington. I would spend thirty minutes with him discussing whatever the subject was. Inevitably, as I rose from my chair to take my leave, Nasser would say: "Wait, Mr. Ambassador". So I would sit down again. Two hours later I would still be there having a vigorous conversation with the President. It was fun. I thoroughly enjoyed these sessions. We would talk about things which were of importance to our relationships. One time, I asked him: "Mr. President, why do you make those terrible speeches? I work hard trying to improve the relationships between our two countries and then you come along and destroy everything in one of your sweeping, broad statements". He answered: "I am only talking to my people". I told him that that was not possible; he had

## Library of Congress

many audiences in the world, all of whom were listening. I pointed out that his speeches made matters very difficult for us; I had to respond to those Congressmen who took offense at his statements. Nasser pointed out that they said unkind things about him. I then made a suggestion. I said: "Any time the President of the United States, the Vice-President or the Secretary of State made a negative comment about you or Egypt, you may answer in kind. I won't object under those circumstances. But when you decide to answer the tirade of some obscure Congressman, you magnify his impact. You attract more attention to him than he would get otherwise. You are undermining your own cause". Nasser didn't of course believe that the Congressmen made the anti-Nasser remarks without instructions from the President. He found it very hard to believe my statements that Congressmen could say anything they wanted. In any case, for a while after that conversation, he was pretty good. Then negative things began to happen again. First, Averell Harriman went to Israel after a so-called scandal—it wasn't really a scandal; just a bad mistake. We had been encouraging the German government to sell tanks to the Israelis. We were replacing these tanks in Germany with more modern equipment. First, we denied that we had any knowledge of the transaction. Then it was exposed. Everybody started accusing us of being quite dishonest and I guess we were. Until that time, our arms sales to Israel had been quite minor. Harriman went to Israel to discuss arms sales. The press became very active and reported that we would be providing tanks and planes. At that point, I was sufficiently familiar with Nasser's schedule and could tell when he would make his next speech and where it would be made. We tried to forestall any anti-American comments that might be included in his next speech. I called Sami Sharaf, who was the Presidential office "door-keeper" and asked him to give the President a message that the stories out of Israel had badly distorted Averell Harriman's visit. I promised that I would get a full report of the visit and that then I would pay a call on President Nasser. Then press reporting was not accurate and I expressed the hope that the President would not react until he had gotten the full story. Sharaf agreed that he would pass the message on. I saw Nasser a few days later and he said: "I am glad you called about Harriman's visit. I was about to discuss it in my next speech. You know how I go about making these speeches. I

## Library of Congress

make short notes and speak from them". I knew that was his modus operandi and I would try to forestall his penchant for these ad libs. I did this two or three times. In fact we got into a pattern of preventative diplomacy and it worked, at least for a while. But my last months in Cairo, were very, very difficult.

There are another couple of stories that I might inject at this time. One concerns an American by the name of John Birdsall. I had never heard of him. He was a New York businessman, a successful one, although not a great tycoon. He was approached in Western Europe by an Egyptian, who asked him whether he would like to meet Abdul Nasser. Birdsall had never had any business contacts with Egypt or any other part of the Middle East. We never did divine why Birdsall had been selected. He was secretly flown to Cairo and met with Nasser. Nasser told him that he was terrified that the Americans were trying to kill him and I knew about the plot. He foresaw the possibility of real danger and disaster for US-Egyptian relations. Birdsall never called on me while he was in Egypt. He returned to the US, completely perplexed about what had happened to him. He didn't understand what Nasser's message meant. I received an instruction from the Department to see Nasser to reassure him that we were not trying to kill him. That was one of my most difficult tasks in my life. I made an appointment and although my instructions were to be the center piece of my conversation, I found it difficult to lead up to them. I started by mentioning that Birdsall, with whom "you recently met" had discussed his meeting with officials in Washington. I had been requested by my government to assure him that we had no intention of trying to reduce his control over Egypt or to impact on him personally. I assured him that there were no American-sponsored plots against him. Nasser nodded happily. I thought that while the whole episode was extremely strange, that this would be the end of it. It wasn't. Apparently, whoever started this process, thought that the best contact with the United States government was through the business community. At one time, the Egyptians believed that the best channels were through USIA or CIA; at other times, they thought that it would be Jack McCloy or David Rockefeller or other great business tycoons who visited Egypt often. This time, they had focused again on the



## Library of Congress

business community as the best avenue to really impress upon the US the concerns they felt. In my conversation with Nasser, I never referred to shooting him or getting rid of him which according to Birdsall seemed to be his real concern. My meeting with Nasser was very cordial and there was no particular problem even after I raised the main subject of discussion. I saw him again three or four times in the next few months and there seemed to have been no tensions. We got along as we always had which was quite well. When I returned to Washington to become Assistant Secretary of State, after the "Six-Day War" and after the collapse of our diplomatic relations with so many countries in the Middle East region, I felt very strongly that we should utilize businessmen, such as McCloy, Rockefeller—I also wanted to use Bob Anderson, but the President for reason unknown to me, said "No"—and others. They were visiting the Middle East regularly and I felt that they would be the best channels that were then available for communications to the governments with which we had strained relationships, such as Egypt. They could see Nasser if they wanted to. It never occurred to me that there would be any repetition of the Birdsall affair. But much to my surprise, Birdsall was invited again on very short notice, flown to Cairo in secret and a meeting with Nasser. Upon his return to the US, he came to see me with a message signed by Nasser. That was a very strange operation. The Egyptians insisted that they wanted an answer and that Birdsall had to see the President of the United States. On balance, I recommended that he should see the President, although this did not make Johnson very happy. We had an audience of about three minutes, but Johnson did see Birdsall and signed a note of acknowledgment to Nasser. Nasser's message was essentially an expression of interest of having good relations with the US and of regret that these relations were not good at the moment. It made no sense at all in the broader context. But it was an example of the peculiar use the Egyptians made of unofficial channels. John Birdsall died about five years ago and in The New York Times obituary, it said, much to my amazement, that he had been a special emissary to Nasser. That of course was true, but how it came to be printed, is a mystery to me. When I was the head of the John Hopkins SAIS Foreign Policy Institute, his son was a student. On the first day of enrollment, he came to see me and asked whether the name Birdsall

## Library of Congress

meant anything to me. I admitted that he did and then he told me that he was John's son. That also surprised me. Nothing of course came from this strange procedure. It is only of interest because it was and still is so perplexing and incomprehensible to us. It illustrates the eternal search for "real" power that the Egyptians believed was always someone other than the appointed authority. That view goes back to the days of the officers' coup when in the period that followed it, they had regular liaison with the CIA. They had some contacts with the Embassy—considerable with the Ambassador himself—, but still felt that the real source of power was CIA. They viewed the normal diplomatic channel as being secondary to the back-door operation. That back channel was never important except in the other episode I want to describe.

That story concerned a Mustapha Amin. It was similar to the Birdsall affair and very embarrassing and extremely unfortunate in a number of ways. Amin was the twin brother of Ali Amin. Both were newspaper editors. At various times, they had worked together. In the early days of the revolution, they had been close to Nasser, particularly Mustapha. He had been on the US payroll. When I went to Cairo, I was assured that there were no such cases at the time, but in fact, there were. The Amin case was the devastating one. I knew that Bruce Odell, a CIA man—who now gives interviews to newspapers, causing considerable embarrassment—had been meeting regularly with Mustapha Amin. I had been assured that no funds had been exchanged in Egypt, but a photograph of such transaction was made when Mustapha Amin was arrested. I was at a diplomatic luncheon, completely unaware, when the story broke. I was called to go immediately to the Foreign Office to see the Acting Foreign Minister. I did so and was presented with photographs showing the money being given to Amin in a garden in Alexandria. Bruce Odell had denied any wrong doing. My standing instructions were never to admit that such events ever took place. I did that and returned to the Embassy, called the CIA chief, the DCM and the Political Counselor for a meeting to decide what we should do. It was obviously going to be a major story and it was. The next day, it was front page material in all the newspapers. Despite his earlier connection with Nasser, Mustapha Amin's relationship

## Library of Congress

with the President had cooled off in more recent years. He was one of the people who had been close to the leaders of the revolution, but whose relationships did not last. There were a number of people whose relationships with Nasser and his cohorts went up and down. Gustafa Amin was sent to prison, where he was tortured badly, according to the rumors I heard later. He was eventually released when Sadat came to power. There are a number of aspects of this story that are disturbing. First of all were our activities which relied on old regime types who had supported the revolution, but didn't really have a lasting relationship with Nasser and his group—this unfortunately happened too often in Egypt. Cairo was a particularly bad place for conducting intelligence activities—there were too many restraints on such activities, it was unsafe and most of the operations didn't amount to anything. For the risks we took, very little was gained through these intelligence operations. I was always meeting people who wanted to give me messages; I ignored all of them. Behind every palm, there was someone waiting to tell me something “vitally important”. At times, it was ridiculous.

During my last year in Cairo, all these events took place. President Nasser in his speeches was restraining himself mightily not to be completely anti-American and too critical of us. The last time I saw Nasser was on March 4, 1967. I had a couple of hours with him. It was a long talk, during which he withdrew his request for economic assistance, which he had made two or three weeks before his first attack on the US That finished any chance of resuming assistance, which gave me a sense of real defeat, because I couldn't explain to Nasser why it would be so, even after he and his press had shown a restraint for over a year. Dr. Kassuni, who was the Minister for Economic Affairs, had been in touch with me on a weekly basis to see whether we had received any news from the Department about assistance extensions. He was getting desperate; Egypt needed the food. It was also a great strain on those in the government who were pro-Western and had staked their careers on finding an accommodation with the US or at least the West eventually. On Valentine's Day, 1967, Nasser made his first attack on the US after a long period of relative calm. It came unfortunately during a period of consultations in Washington with

## Library of Congress

Senator Hickenlooper, who was then the ranking minority member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. While the administration were getting his blessings to extend aid to Egypt, Nasser's speech was shown to him and that was the end of Hickenlooper's acquiescence. It was then all over. So when I made my farewell call to Nasser, he withdrew his request for aid. I told him that I wanted the record to show that he had given up on the issue before I had done so. I thought that we might be able to have a new beginning in the US-Egypt relations, but I understood his view. But I stayed that day with Nasser for a long time, chatting about a variety of issues. I asked him about the Arab-Israeli conflict and what the future held for that problem. He said that there would be no war in the future except at a place and time of his choice. It would only come when Egypt was ready for it and he admitted that it was not then ready. That was March 4; the war started June 5. I don't think he meant to say that he would never do anything to excite the situation, but I do think that on that day, he did not expect war and certainly was not seeking one. He recognized his deficiencies in carrying one out.

On our last evening we were in Cairo, Heikal had a dinner for us. We had had a long string of farewell dinners, but this was the last one. This was given in his apartment in Cairo. He had invited the Sadats. Mahmoud Riad, General Marshal Amer. That was the only time I had spoken with the General. The dinner was late starting, as they always were in Egypt. I think it lasted until 2 a.m. the next morning. As was customary, the men after dinner went off by themselves. It was very depressing because all the guests showed great anxiety about the relationships with the United States. The next morning, when I went to the office—I was leaving Cairo after lunch—to dictate my last telegram—which incidentally has never been released for reason unknown to me. In essence it said that Nasser was in real trouble, economically and politically. I was absolutely convinced of that, particularly after my conversation with him. There was a defeatism about the situation, elusive, but present. Because of his difficulties, I predicted that Nasser was about to do something dramatic. I said that he had three choices, as I saw it: a) he could heat up his presence in Yemen, which at that time was occupied by 65,000 of his troops—that would have put pressure

## Library of Congress

on the Saudis to increase their contributions to Egypt by significant amounts; b) he could heat up the Libyan situation where he had 18,000 teachers and technicians—that might increase Libyan aid from King Idris; c) least likely, but still an option, was to heat up the Israeli situation, not because he wanted to go to war, which I believed he did not, but to prove that he was a political giant and restore the awe and prestige that many of the Third World countries felt for him, but which had been in decline in recent months.

When I returned to Washington to become Assistant Secretary, I thought Nasser had taken the first option. Yemen claimed an American charge blew up an ammo dump—it was really done by the British, but three Americans were arrested. They were eventually released. I thought that was part of Nasser's strategy to heat up the Yemen tensions. But the episode didn't last long. The Egyptians soon thereafter began to make unfortunate comments about the Israeli situation. The rest is history. The war came and Nasser never recovered from his decline which started before the war and accelerated after it.

My tour in Egypt was very exciting and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I liked the Egyptians. We had a very pleasant life in Cairo despite all sorts of difficulties. I didn't think the obstacles were insurmountable and I tried to keep going despite the setbacks. I did not act as though we were a power devoid of any influence in Egypt. Nasser was in awe of the United States; he didn't understand us. I used to take books to him about the US which he read. He was particularly interested in the Kennedys; they fascinated him. Jack Kennedy had only died fairly recently when I was in Egypt. Once Ted Kennedy and John Tunney and their wives came to Egypt. I spent several days with them, over the 1966 Thanksgiving weekend. I took the Senators out to call on Nasser. He was very interested in seeing Ted Kennedy. In fact, all Egyptians, from high to low, all felt an identity with the Kennedys as so many other people in the world did. Jack Kennedy was young, bright, vigorous; he was the world's embodiment of "The American". Whether it was an accurate perception or not, was not an issue; the perception was a force that had to be acknowledged.

## Library of Congress

You asked me what sort of informational relationships we had in the Embassy. I had pretty good access to government. Throughout the time I was there I saw the Foreign Minister, the Acting Foreign Minister and several of the other Ministers regularly. When I arrived in Cairo, we had 58 people in the Military Attach#s Office. We needed about three. We had two planes. Shortly after I arrived, I offered to surrender one of the planes, but the military resisted. I had another problem while in Cairo; I was given clearance to know about a spy satellite—I had to be given a special briefing. So I was cleared to receive the information from that satellite. None of the military attach#s were, although if they had read The New York Times they would have had the information. I had insisted that they clear any of their operations with me prior to their initiation. I would pass judgement on their plans, knowing more than they did about what was already available to the US government. They loved me to travel on one of their planes because they would load a camera on board and take pictures while we were flying. The military kept saying that I didn't fly often enough and that I should travel more frequently. I thought I had seen enough and in any case, the same photos that the attach#s might get were already available from the satellite. I kept sending messages to Washington urging that the senior military attach# be briefed on the satellite operation. The senior officials in the Pentagon of course knew what the satellite was picking up, but the people who ran the attach# program knew nothing about it. So it appeared to them that I was flying so little that all information about Egypt was drying up. The truth was that the attach#s were duplicating what was already available. I made judgements based on what seemed logical to me; for example, one day CIA came to me, asking for approval for them to charter a state-room on a boat in Alexandria. There were some Russian ships in the harbor which they wanted to photograph. I decided that a satellite could not see the side of the Russian ships, as you could from a state-room. So I approved it, even at the risk of possible damage to our reputation in Egypt. That is how I made the decisions on these clandestine operations. Finally, we went to Frankfurt on the attach# plane. Some of the attach#s who were on the plane with me got briefed in Frankfurt and finally understood what I was doing. Then they were in the same position I was with their subordinates. They agreed that I had done the correct thing and appreciated

## Library of Congress

the fact that I minimized the risks because we already had the information. Occasionally, the attach#s would do things without my permission. One time, two of them took the desert road to Alexandria which took them past some sort of Egyptian military facilities. They got out of their car and took pictures right from the side of the road. They got caught and held for a day. It was a ridiculous operation; they knew that they were terribly vulnerable to being caught. We had a few instances of that kind, both with the attach#s and the CIA personnel. Those instances were always real problems.

The diplomatic corps in Cairo at this time, was not particularly strong. We had a regular "ABC" lunch, as we called it—Americans, British, Canadians, along with the Germans and Italians—about every six weeks. These lunches were of some assistance. I found that I gave more than I got in the terms of information since I was more likely to have someone of importance in the days just prior to the lunch. My meetings with Nasser were always reported in the newspapers. All diplomats would come around to see what I had picked up from the President. My other reliable source was Heikal. I did see the American press frequently. I used to brief them. Hedrick Smith was one of the American correspondents, working for The New York Times. The burning of the library and the shooting down of the plane scared the Egyptian press and they didn't want to talk. They got over that in a few weeks. At moments of real strain, the Egyptian press, by and large, were not available. Egyptians were scared at those moments; they were afraid of being sequestered, taken away or that they would lose their livelihoods and their possessions. It happened to a few of them. The rapping of the door in the middle of the night was not uncommon occurrence. In the beginning, the revolution was not a tough one; it became much more so as time passed. So the Egyptians in the main were not very constant in their relationships with us. They would get scared by any major stresses with the United States. They became nervous. I was surprised by the number of friends, whom I considered as close, who would not visit during the periods of strains. On a regular basis, I saw the Governor of Cairo—Sala Desouki—who was one of my best friends (he was fired and sent off as an Ambassador by Nasser when he told him on one occasion that he was wrong)—, Heikal,



## Library of Congress

the Minister of Agriculture—Sayyed Marei—, and Sadat. These people I saw regularly. After the Governor was fired, he was put under semi-house arrest in Alexandria on the sea coast. His property happened to abut on that of the Japanese Ambassador. They would meet every once in a while strolling on the beach. I asked the Japanese Ambassador to mention to him that I was purposely not being in touch with him until his problems with Nasser were over, even though he was probably my closest Egyptian friend. After several weeks, he called me and said there was a book in my library that he wanted to borrow. He wanted to come to pick it and so I invited him for dinner. He accepted and that was his signal to me that he was no longer in danger.

As for the others, we saw lot of Egyptians except in those period of serious US-Egypt strains. One never knew what was in Nasser's mind; that would be too much to expect. But I did have conversations in depth with him; they were all very interesting. As I said earlier, I would have a half hour appointment and end up staying with Nasser for two hours. We would discuss everything. I would take him books, pointing out the ones that were rough on him. I would suggest that he read them. He would laugh. He wanted to read everything that I could bring him on the Kennedy period. I would bring him material on that subject; when I would see him next, he would mention having read it. He would be irritated at times with some of the books. These are just illustrations of the remarkable relations that Nasser and I had. I always saw him alone, except when I took some Congressman or Senator to see him. I never felt cut off, except right after the burning of the library. I made some very good Egyptian friends; for example, Mohammed El Sayat, who is still alive and who was Under Secretary at the time I was in Cairo. I keep in touch with a number of my old Egyptian friends.

We of course could never be quite sure of what was happening, but I thought that I and the Embassy had enough sources to give us confidence. I used the telephones, knowing full well that they were “bugged”. I would warn an Embassy staffer that I would call him and make some comments about the Egyptian positions. I would suggest what I thought the Egyptians should do about a particular issue. Sometimes I got a feed-back. On one

## Library of Congress

particular occasion, a Foreign Office official almost quoted a comment I had made on the phone, back to me. I told him that he had an accurate view of my feelings and asked him how he knew. He didn't answer but told me that the Egyptian government intended to do what I had suggested on the telephone. On other occasions, I got answers back from the Egyptians rather quickly after they had intercepted one of my calls. That was life in Cairo. You learn to play within the established ground-rules and take advantage of them if necessary. It all added to my enjoyment of my tour in Cairo.

During my period in Cairo, we got a new library, given to us by Nasser. We renewed it completely; in many respects, it was better than the old library—better located. We had an official opening, attended by Charlton Heston, the movie actor, who was in Cairo at the time shooting a film. We dedicated the library as the “Kennedy Library” and Heston read President Kennedy's Inaugural Address. It was very impressive. The library is still functioning. I have visited it again in recent years.

I should also discuss the US Residence in Cairo. We did not own the building we lived in; it had been sequestered. We had signed a lease, which had expired, but we had a verbal understanding that we could occupy the house as long as we wanted to. We had a fund of approximately \$200 million worth of Egyptian pounds. They were frozen and could not be used for anything that was inflationary or which could effect the economy adversely. That was part of the PL 480 agreement. I thought the US government should own a residence. I wanted to buy one, because to build one would have been too difficult in Egypt, if it were to be an American style house, designed by an American architect. It has been done in other countries, but I was not prepared to face the anguish of doing so in Egypt. Furthermore, if we were to build the house, we could not have used the frozen funds and I wanted to tap into that reservoir. We would have had to use dollars and I thought that was not wise under the existing relationships. So we began to look for a house to buy. There was one house which attracted me. It was a precise copy of an 18th. Century French Chateau, at least on the outside. The inside was arabic, with lovely, large square rooms. The property was magnificent—a full city block right on the Nile next to the

## Library of Congress

French Embassy. I began to inquire about it and was told that Madame Ghali lived there. She was a widow, who had been married to the former Egyptian Foreign Minister and briefly Prime Minister. She lived there alone. She was French by birth and had planned to return to France after the death of her husband. She had taken one last walk in her garden one morning and had come across a cardboard box under a bush. She told the gardener, who was with her, to take the box away, but before doing so, they looked inside and much to their amazement, found a baby boy in it. She had been childless, which was very troublesome to her. She therefore felt that this was God's gift to her and that this was His signal to her not leave Egypt, but to stay to take care of the little boy. I became very friendly with Madame Ghali. She told me that she wanted to sell the house, but needed foreign currency for her and her son's support. She wanted to know whether the US government would buy it for Swiss francs or other hard currency. I told her that we could not do that; it was illegal in Egypt and it was not a US practice either. Despite that answer, she became increasingly interested in selling her house to the US government. Finally, she asked me to be prepared to buy it and that upon her death, her lawyer would come to see me immediately. One evening, when I was home alone—the family had gone off to Alexandria—just as I was sitting down for dinner, Sirri came and announced that a Greek lawyer was sitting in a car in front of the house waiting to see me. He told me that the lawyer was Madame Ghali's attorney. She had just died that day. I had already gotten the Department's approval to buy the house. So I called the administrative officer and my own lawyer to come to the house immediately. We finally convinced the Greek lawyer to come into the Residence; he didn't want to be seen entering it. That evening, in a matter of minutes, we signed the papers and bought the house. The next day, I took a copy of the agreement to the Foreign Office and we thought that would take care of the transaction. It did not quite. First of all, the foundling had never been adopted because in Egypt then, a single woman could not adopt a child. So she got the gardener to adopt the child. There were many people who believed that the boy was the gardener's son in the first place. In any case, the young boy was treated like a prince. He lived primarily with her. When I visited Madame Ghali, the little boy was always in evidence, with his nursemaid. After

## Library of Congress

her death, the press carried the story that I had bought the house and paid for it in gold bullion. They arrested the Greek lawyer and pictured him with long strips of gold, which I had allegedly given him, which had been found under his bed. It was assumed that they had come from us. There was a big two-day scandal, in which I was accused of carrying gold bullion around with me. Later, the Greek Ambassador called me to find out what I was doing to protect Ghali's lawyer. I told him that he was not my client, but that he represented Madame Ghali's estate. That therefore it was up to the Greek government to protect its own citizens. The Greek Ambassador did not agree feeling that since the lawyer had been accused in a transaction with the US government, it was up to the US Embassy to protect him. I told the Ambassador that I had paid for the house by check—\$250,000, in pounds Egyptian—today the property is worth millions. My position was that I wanted the property or the check returned. I told the Greek Ambassador that the bullion was not ours and we did not pay for the house in that way. I had never seen gold bullion.

Shortly thereafter, the French Ambassador called and said that there were some cars on the property, in a lower level, which included two taxi cabs that had been used to transport troops to the Battle of the Marne. He claimed them as his own because he said that Madame Ghali had given them to him before her death. He wanted to be sure that I protected his rights to those taxi cabs. I told him that we had nothing to do with those taxi cabs. They had not been listed in the property to be transferred to the United States and therefore, although we had bought the house, we had nothing to do with any personal property that may have been left on the estate. I told the French Ambassador that he would have to deal with the lawyers responsible for the estate. He insisted that it was up to me to insure that he would get his cabs because they were in the house which we now owned. I told him I would take no action, but that it was up to him to make his claims with Madame Ghali's estate. Madame Ghali's aunt and uncle came from Paris. They were an interesting couple. They didn't speak any English. They moved into the house because although we had a purchase agreement, we had not yet received title to the house. The house was filled with beautiful artifacts—Egyptian antiquities, rugs, etc. All of that has

## Library of Congress

been willed to the aunt and uncle. They invited me to buy some of the artifacts. I told them that I would love to do that, but I wouldn't do so until they had approval to sell it and until someone official would stand besides me to initial every purchase I made. This went on for weeks. The residence was ours, but wasn't. Finally, the aunt and uncle called and said that the tax authorities were there and that they were then prepared to sell all of the furniture and artifacts. So I went and bought about \$2,000 worth of furniture and furnishings, some of which I still have. I had the sale slip signed by the government's representative. About six weeks later, a terrible thing happened at the recently acquired property. Some Egyptian police or army officers moved into the house and took it over. There were signs all around the house lot saying that it was US government property. The American flag flew over the house. We had legal possession, but not title yet. The troops moved; they removed all the signs and the flag. I called the Foreign Office to protest. I told him that although I was supposed to go to Alexandria in one hour, I would wait for his call to tell me that the troops had withdrawn. The aunt and uncle, who still lived in the house, were terrified, although by this time they were mostly drunk on Egyptian wine, which was not to their liking, but all that was available. We did have an Egyptian caretaker, paid by us, live there. In any case, the French couple ran across the street to the French Embassy. So the French Ambassador called me again to see what I was doing about the "invasion". About an hour later, the Foreign Office called and told me that all the signs that we had put up, had been put up by string and they had all fallen off. I asked whether all had fallen off at the same time and I was told that they had. Furthermore, the flag had not been raised by our caretaker. In any case, the excuses went on and on, but the troops withdrew and our signs and flag were put up again. When I left Cairo[ on March 4, 1967, the house was still in the same legal situation. I had planned to redo the house so that additional bedrooms could be put on the top floor that had never been finished. But when I left Cairo, I didn't know how the story would turn out. But right after the Six Day War, during some very difficult US-Egypt relations, I received a telegram informing me that title had finally passed to the US government and that we could now occupy the house. That was true for a while. However, Sadat had often mentioned the house; he loved it. He mentioned it to Nixon during of the

## Library of Congress

President's visit. So Nixon gave him the house. Anwar Sadat then wanted to move into the house, but decided that security was not adequate and that a new wall would have to be put around it. He also tore the house down. That was unfortunate because when we acquired it, it was a show-case. In any case, the lot laid bare for two or three years. In exchange for that house, Sadat was to have given us another suitable house, but he never did. After Sadat's death, the property was returned to the US government, without the house which had been removed. It was still a spectacular lot, right on the Nile, very beautiful. So the US government built a house right on the river on the remains of the old one. It was quite large and although I have never been it, I was sent a copy of the floor plans. It was built under the supervision of an American architect, Metcalf, who spent a lot of time in Cairo. Ambassadors Eilts, Veliotis and Atherton, didn't like the structure of the house at all. It looked like a fort. When Veliotis switched the light on, in his first visit, water spouted out. In the construction work, the Egyptian workers had gotten the water and electric lines mixed up. So water poured out throughout the house from the walls. The house was an awful mess and Veliotis was relieved that he never had to live in it. The house was disaster. According to the press, it had cost us a million dollars to restore the house, but no one ever lived in it. Finally, the US government sold it to an Arab sheik from Saudi Arabia. He didn't like it either and tore the house down and I don't know what is on the lot now. The aunt and uncle went back to France after a devastating experience of many months. The little boy continued to live with the gardener and that is the end of the story as I know it.

I left Cairo in March 1967 and toured all the countries in the NEA region—twenty-two in all for which the Bureau of Near East and South Asia Affairs was responsible. I was returning to Washington to be the Assistant Secretary for that Bureau. I had returned to Washington on home leave during the summer of 1966. At that time George Ball, the Under Secretary of State was resigning; Tom Mann, who had been the Under Secretary for Political Affairs was resigning and the Deputy Under Secretary was leaving and the job of Assistant Secretary for NEA was also becoming vacant. So there were four senior

## Library of Congress

vacancies in the Department. The press carried innumerable stories that I would fill one of the jobs. I had no word at all; all I knew is what I read; some of the stories appeared to be coming out of the White House. I was quite upset because some one was obviously leaking and it wasn't I. Bill Bundy and I were mentioned most frequently as candidates for those jobs. I first heard the rumors when we were in California visiting my wife's family. The Egyptian desk officer called me and told me what had been printed in the day's issue of The New York Times—namely that I would be the Under Secretary. I didn't particularly want the job and I didn't want to get involved in the selection process in any way. The situation was very embarrassing. When I returned to Washington, I went to see George Ball, who was a personal friend. He said that all the press was speculating that I would be his successor. The Vietnam war was at its height and there were a lot of things in the job that I didn't want at that particular moment. Ball wanted me to read the whole Vietnam story as reflected in the stack of his memoranda on the subject that he had written to the President and the Secretary of State. He had objected to our involvement. So I sat in a small office right behind his for many hours reading his commentaries. I lunched with Ball a couple of times. He thought that it was too late to get out of Vietnam by then; we had gotten in too deep and could not retreat. He told me what he thought should be done and hope that I would continue the fight. I thought the fight was over and that the decision to stay in Vietnam had already been made.

In any case, I spent a month that summer in Washington. The President said that he didn't want to see me because it would only stir up the rumor mill more. On our last night in Washington, Averell Harriman gave a dinner for us. Clark Clifford and others were there. When we arrived at the Harriman's door, Marie Harriman said that one of the press was inside upstairs with Averell at that moment. So Averell did not greet us, but a few moments later, I saw Rowland Evans leave and Averell came down soon thereafter. He said that it was absolutely definite that I would be the next Under Secretary. I told him that I was leaving in the morning and hadn't heard anything. During the dinner, Harriman gave a little speech to about 20 guests that were present. He even proposed a toast to me as the next



## Library of Congress

Under Secretary of State. I responded by saying that I hated to tell my host that he was wrong, but I was leaving for Cairo in the morning, had bought enough aspirin to last me there for two years and as far as I knew, there wasn't substance to the rumor. Of course, everybody thought I was just covering up. The whole episode was very embarrassing.

So I returned to Cairo and saw in the wireless file that Nick Katzenbach had been appointed as Under Secretary. He had been the Attorney General. I thought that meant that I would stay in Cairo. A couple of weeks passed and then came the message, saying that I was wanted as Assistant Secretary for the NEA Bureau. I was relieved because I thought that at that moment in time, that was the job for which I was best qualified. Gene Rostow was appointed as Under Secretary for Political Affairs and Foy Kohler as the Deputy Under Secretary. As far as I was concerned, the NEA job suited me. I had no desire to be the Under Secretary. I was spared a lot of grief by not being so appointed. Apparently, it was a close call. So I returned to Washington in 1967. I would have liked to stay in Cairo a while longer, but that was not to be.

There are a number of matters that I should discuss in connection with my tenure as Assistant Secretary for the Near East and South Asia Bureau. First of all, there was a matter of my replacement in Cairo. After my nomination as Assistant Secretary, I received a personal message from Katzenbach saying that Richard Nolte would be coming to Egypt. He was already in the area. He was one possible candidate for the Ambassadorship. There were others and the final selection had not been made. But I was asked to talk to Nolte and discuss with him life and problems in Cairo. So Nolte arrived and spoke as if his appointment was a fait accompli. He looked over the house and checked around. I did exactly what I was told to do and told him what the situation in Cairo was. When I appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for my confirmation as Assistant Secretary, Nolte was there also for his hearings as Ambassador to Egypt. We were both confirmed without problems. This was April, 1967. He told me at the time that he didn't think that he was going to go to Cairo until the Fall. I expressed the view that Egypt was about to blow up; I didn't know what would happen and described my last

## Library of Congress

telegram to him. There were a lot of internal and external pressures on Egypt; it was in trouble. I suggested that at least he go to Cairo to present his credentials; he could then return to the States at his own expense, if he wanted to. I did not believe that we could afford to have our Ambassador's post in Cairo vacant for any length of time. He said that Katzenbach had told him that there was no rush. I told him that I would have to talk to the Under Secretary because that was certainly not my view; we needed someone out there in a hurry. He finally agreed that he would go to Cairo sooner than he had planned. He stopped in London for a few days and then went on to Cairo. I liked Dick and got along well with him. At a different time, he would have been quite satisfactory as our Ambassador in Cairo. He spoke Arabic and knew the area fairly well and had lived in it. So the appointment was logical, but not at that particular moment. I told him that he should read the cable traffic while he was in London. We would repeat all out messages to Cairo to London so that he could read them. Almost immediately, events developed that led to the Six Day War. However, Nolte did not go to the Embassy and therefore did not read the cables—he was in London for ten days or two weeks. So by the time he got to Cairo, there was a real crisis. When he deplaned, the press asked him about it. He asked: "What crisis?". What he really meant to say was that he was not viewing the situation as a crisis one yet. He must have been reading the newspapers and must have known that something was afoot. But when he said: "What crisis?" he sounded stupid. Those two words just about finished him. It was very unfortunate. It was the practice in Cairo, as may be in other places as well, that Ambassadors, on the first day in the city, delivered a copy of their credentials to the Foreign Office. That was followed by the presentation of the credentials to the President depending on when you arrived in the country. In Nolte's case, the presentation was delayed for reasons that I don't know—it may have been that there were a lot of other Ambassadors ahead of him. President Johnson became very upset by this delay. He wanted to know what the hold-up was. I told President Johnson that Ambassadors were taken in order of their arrivals. Johnson insisted, but I told him that that is the way the process worked in Cairo. Johnson told me to go back to Cairo. I answered: "Mr. President, I don't think that is a good idea. You would destroy your Ambassador

## Library of Congress

if I were to show up again. My visit would only be a negative and unfair to Nolte". So a couple of days went by and nothing happened. In my period, Nasser did not talk with any foreign representatives, except the Americans and the Russians. He may have received the British on rare occasions, but essentially he only spoke to the American and Russian Ambassadors. The President and everybody else was getting very nervous; there were many major problems and we had no communication with Nasser. So I suggested that Charlie Yost be sent as a "Special Envoy". He was known to a number of the senior Egyptian government officials; he had met Nasser. He was an old established hand in the area. Everybody agreed and Charlie, who was in Washington at the time, did not seem adverse to the idea. So he went to Cairo and proved very useful. But he couldn't stay and the situation continued to deteriorate. Nolte never did present his credentials. War came and his assignment was terminated. It was a sad story in many ways. Nolte was not accustomed to government practices: he had never worked for the United States. The whole process down to how to get a cable out, was new to him. So he had a number of very rough days and had to return when we evacuated Egypt. During the last few months I was in Cairo, David Nes, who was there, raised the question of whether we had a current evacuation plan. There was one, but I didn't know whether it any good. So I asked Nes to review and update it. He did a fine job and was still working on some of the details when I left. It was that evacuation plan that was put into effect. It helped evacuate two thousand from Egypt and forty thousand Americans from the area. We lost only one person and he had a heart attack. We had some close calls, but the evacuation was successful, not only in Egypt, but in all the Arab countries that we left, although there were certain some difficulties here and there.

I would now like to turn to the major crises that occurred while I was Assistant Secretary. The first was the crises in Yemen, which was not a lengthy one or in historical perspective, a very important one. The second one was the Greek coup which was followed by the third one—the Six Day War which was very important and the fourth one was the Cyprus crisis of 1967. Earlier I mentioned my last telegram from Cairo, written on the morning

## Library of Congress

of my departure, I had voiced the opinion that Egypt was in real trouble and that Nasser would try one of three tracks because he was cornered, economically and politically. I had mentioned that one of his options was to stir up trouble in Yemen, in an effort to increase Saudi payments to Egypt. They were not being as generous as he felt they should be. I returned to Washington and was sworn in during the first week in April. Shortly thereafter, the Yemen crisis began. I don't remember all the details, but suffice it to say that three Americans were arrested; one was quickly released (and the others eventually). They were charged with blowing up an ammunition dump. In fact, which I only discovered later, the demolition work was done by the British. The perpetrators ran through the American compound and were followed by some dogs that chased them. That was how the Americans became suspect. The three Americans that were arrested were put in 17th. Century jails. It was very unpleasant. I had expected an increase in tensions and for a few days the arrest loomed as a major problem.

At the time, I was preoccupied in a coup in Greece which was the first one which occurred during my years as Assistant Secretary, That started just a few days after I was sworn in. What interested me about this particular one was that Andreas Papandreou was captured and put into a very comfortable villa, under house arrest, where he was treated very well. The American academic community rose wildly in support of him, taking out ads in the newspapers in which it claimed that State Department was sitting on its hands and not trying to get their colleague released. At the same time, the Americans captured in Yemen, who were government officials and were held in very primitive conditions and not at all comparable to the luxuries that Papandreou was enjoying, had no domestic support at all. There was no anxiety expressed for them—no letters, no calls, no newspaper ads. At the beginning, the Yemen story got about as much publicity as the Greek coup did. During this period, I went to Harvard to give a speech to a faculty group. I told them that I had been very interested in their reactions to the Yemen and Greek situations. I felt that the issues were comparable in the two situations. In both cases, people were being held without due process of law; the charges were that of spying; no trial had been held in

## Library of Congress

either case. But, I noted, that I had heard loudly and often from the Harvard faculty on the Greek situation but not a peep on Yemen. I asked them where they stood. If it was a matter of principle, why wasn't it being applied to both situations? In essence, the answer was that Papandreou was "one of ours". They said that they knew him when he taught at Wisconsin and Minnesota; he never paid his bar bill. There were other comments of that kind, but they felt nevertheless that he was of their own, whereas the two held in Yemen, although also Americans, did not generate the same response. Some thought that the two may have been CIA agents. But I found very interesting the different responses of the Harvard faculty and others to what I perceived to be the same essential human rights violations.

So the Greek and Yemen crises ran parallel for a little while. The Yemen problem was finally resolved; we sent Dick Parker from Cairo to try to settle matters. It did not turn out to be Nasser's way of extracting greater financial support from the Saudis, although it looked like it for the first few days. The Greek coup was not one that the US had planned, despite all the rumors that were circulating the world press. I have thought about this possibility at length. It is conceivable that some of our military attach#s or perhaps even some other Embassy staff members, knew about the plot and made no effort to discourage it. It was clear that the coup was not planned or instigated by us, but that some Americans knew well the middle grade officers who were the backbone of the coup. It is therefore conceivable that the Greek officers may have heard something from their American contacts that gave them the idea that the US would bless the coup, which was just not true. Strangely enough, the coup did not raise much interest in Congress. We had many calls and questions—some even outlandish—, but essentially, Congress accepted the coup as a development of history or in a few cases even as "a good thing". The group that took control of Greece was right wing and military which was more acceptable to most Congressmen and their constituents than if it had been a socialist group led by for example Andreas Papandreou. Many Congressmen were happy with the coup and didn't bother us very much. a few did, but it was not a major uproar. We did the best we could

## Library of Congress

by taking such steps as were available to us—showing disapproval of the coup. We did not sever relations with Greece. The coup dragged on and in time, long after my tenure as Assistant Secretary, an elected government was restored.

The next crisis which came rather rapidly was the Six Day War. Much has been written about it, although I doubt that the whole record is yet known. I thought that I knew everything that occurred during the period leading up to the War, but in retrospect and with the availability of files that I had not seen before, I found that I was not fully informed. That surprised me particularly since much of what I didn't know occurred in the White House. I didn't know all that Johnson, Walt Rostow and various leaders of the Jewish community did in private. I can not vouch for these alleged discussions; there are a number of memoranda in the Johnson library that are confusing and that I don't understand; I certainly had not seen them at the time of the War. Our goal in NEA was to prevent the War from breaking out and we worked very hard toward that end. Unfortunately, Gene Rostow, who was the Under Secretary of State and my immediate boss, went in different ways, which I thought were rather silly. He was a big proponent of a declaration that the Straits of Tiran were an open seas and international waters and that therefore we had every right to navigate on them. I didn't object to the general declaration which was supported particularly by the British and Dutch. The second part of Rostow's plan was to create a naval presence of American and other ships to force our way through the Straits of Tiran which Nasser had closed; I thought that was a little ludicrous. In the first place, there were no ships steaming anywhere near those Straits, at least flying the flags of any countries that were with us. We spent too much time on the issue of the naval presence and it was perfectly apparent to me that no one would join us. Gene was convinced that the British and the Dutch at least would join us. My real question was that even if they did, what would happen? Would our vessels be fired upon? And if so, then what? No one had answers to these questions. I remember an argument I got into with General "Buzz" Wheeler, for whom I had high regard. It was on a Sunday night and we were meeting in the room near Katzenbach's office. When I raised the question of what would happen if

## Library of Congress

our ships were fired on, "Buzz" said: "It means war!". I said I knew that, but what would we do? There was no war plan, to my knowledge. Would we bomb Cairo? I thought that was a doubtful proposition. I thought the Rostow plan led to actions and re-actions which were not predictable with the Arab responses being worse than our first move. It became apparent over the next days, that the fleet would not be assembled; the Dutch were two or three weeks away and in any case they had lost their enthusiasm; the British backed down almost immediately. Everybody supported the declaration because that was relatively innocuous. Nothing came from that. In any case, too much of my time and that of others was taken up by stopping outrageous ideas, such as the naval fleet.

I want at this stage to discuss what triggered the War. I do not believe, and this is generally accepted by most observers, that Nasser intended to go to war. He wanted to stir up the world so to remind it that he was a great leader of the non-aligned world, who could not be ignored and was in his view a major force on the world scene. As I mentioned earlier, his status in the Third World had been on the wane for sometime; his economic position was deteriorating; he had 60,000-70,000 troops bogged down in Yemen from which he derived no profit, political or economic. During my last meeting with him, Nasser referred to Yemen as "his Vietnam", laughing loudly as he said it. We of course had made the same observation for long time, but Nasser had just reached that conclusion. But back to the impending War; I was hoping that we could get some constructive dialogue underway between us and the various competitors in the region which would have slowed down the momentum to war. Someone suggested that Zakaria Mohieddine, who was then the Egyptian Vice-President, be invited to come to Washington; I was very much in favor of it. I did not believe that Nasser wanted a war and that every Egyptian would be looking for a way out of the unpleasant box that Nasser had gotten them into. I thought that if we intervened as a friend of both parties, perhaps as a mediator, we might make some progress, thereby delaying any military action. There had been conversations with the Israelis; Abba Eban, the Israeli Foreign Minister, had been in Washington. The Israelis had a problem; they had fully mobilized which they could not sustain for longer



## Library of Congress

than a couple of weeks without sustaining major economic losses. Eban had a meeting with Johnson, which I attended. The President made a statement that has been widely misinterpreted. He told the Israelis that they would not be alone unless they went alone. To me that meant that they should not go to war alone and I think that is exactly what Johnson intended to mean. But others interpreted his statement as a blessing for an Israeli strike, even if it were a unilateral action. I do not believe that was the true interpretation. But I have been told by Eban recently that there had been some other conversations with the President on the subject, but I have no personal knowledge of any besides the one I attended. I still feel that Johnson was trying to deter a war. The War occurred and many people, for, reasons that I do not understand, were surprised—something like the bombing of Pearl Harbor. I don't understand why they were surprised. The War started after it became public knowledge that Mohieddine would be visiting Washington. I had said to the Secretary and perhaps even to the President that Mohieddine had to be treated very carefully and with the dignity that he was entitled to. After all, he was a Vice-President. He was widely viewed as a friend of the United States although I had never seen much evidence of that. He looked like a choir boy, but wasn't. He had been a high secret police official at one point in his life; I never felt that he was so pro-American as others did, particularly the CIA. I called on him several times, talked to him many times and never saw any great intellectual acumen. I didn't see him as an enemy, but didn't also feel that he was a great American sympathizer. He was supposed to be the off-set to the Prime Minister, who leaned very heavily toward the Soviets. I felt that we should tell the Israelis that Mohieddine was coming; in retrospect that may not have been wise. I thought he could not leave Egypt without great fanfare and the Israelis had to be informed, I hoped the visit might come off without great fuss. Otherwise, I thought the Israelis would feel that we were negotiating with their enemies behind their backs. So I insisted that we tell them and everybody concurred. There are some who argue now that the prospective visit of Mohieddine triggered the War. I don't believe that to be true. The more that is known about the genesis of the War, you wonder whether the Israelis were not delighted to have a reason to attack Egypt. They may have welcomed a war. The War may overtly have

## Library of Congress

been triggered by the Mohieddine visit, but I think it was an excuse more than a reason. The War was a decisive victory for Israel. It was won primarily with French Mirage planes and a precise plan that the Israeli General Staff had developed. It was an unfortunate war in every respect. In the long run, it has not served the purposes of any of the participating countries. It was very bad for Israel because it can not absorb all the Arabs who live on the lands that it took as result of the war. The concept of the Jewish state was the basic issue in the war. Secondly, it has not been good for the Arab world. It was a drain on their economies through the arming and re-arming which it has repeatedly done. It did not serve the interests of the West nor those of the United States. The consequences of the War remain unresolved. The US had a lot of difficulties in the period following the War. I felt then that there was no point in trying to find piece-meal solutions; we had to find a comprehensive answer to the problem. Later, Henry Kissinger tried to find solutions step-by-step, but that was in a different context. My rationale for a comprehensive solution was that public support of Israel and its attack was overwhelming in Europe and the United States. It was the first time that a strong Israeli mood had swept the country, based primarily on the David-Goliath principle represented by Israel's (David) victory over Goliath (the Arab world). It was strange how sweeping this view was; it disappeared quickly in Europe, but not in the United States. It continues to this day; it is still the majority view in the US that Israel is the under-dog. That of course is not accurate; Israel has one of the largest military machines in the world and has had it for several years. The notion of a small, peace-loving country inadequately armed is absolutely wrong and inaccurate. So we have never have had a resolution of the War. Part of the problem, from my point of view, was that during the 1956-57 debacle when the British, French and Israelis invaded Egypt, we had given the Arab world assurances that we would use the Straits of Tiran and that we had forced the three allies to withdraw. That made our position more difficult in 1967 because, although Nasser had not started the war, it was abetted by Nasser and he certainly had threatened all sorts of things contrary to the understandings we thought existed at the end of the 1956-57 war.

## Library of Congress

After the War began, Arab Ambassadors came to see me and asked why we didn't do what we had done the last time; namely, to ask the Israelis to leave the occupied land. In fact, the Israelis had no intention of leaving those territories even if we had told them to do so. In any case, most the American people and certainly the top echelon of our government—Congress and the Executive Branch—was sympathetic to Israel. There was no other policy acceptable except our calling for peace and a comprehensive solution and that we did. We got Security Council Resolution 242 passed on November 22, 1967. We considered that at the time as a gigantic step forward. It is interesting to note, however, that that Resolution, as well as Resolution 338, which was a later reaffirmation of 242, did not mention the Palestinians. The Resolutions refer to “refugees”. All the Arab Ambassadors who came to see me—it seemed that I had in my office every hour—were pushing us to resolve the issues. They all talked about “the refugees”. No one mentioned a Palestinian state or entity. The question of Palestinian institution never arose. That is hard to believe, but it is true. I discussed this fact with Lord Caredon, who was the British representative to the U.N. at the time. He was instrumental in negotiating the Resolution and was the force behind its passage. He agrees with me that none pressed him on the question of a Palestine state or entity. We were only pressed for justice for “the refugees”. The initial concerns were for the survival of Jordan, for the return of the West Bank to Jordan and ultimately for restoration of the occupied territories to their original countries. The immediate concern was for what the King of Jordan might do. At one point, he toyed with the idea of trying to make peace alone. We were not talking in 1967 about a Palestinian state or anything resembling it. That issue began to emerge around 1970. The pressure of a solution of the Palestinian problem, as opposed to the Arab-Israeli problem or to the “refugee” problem, changed form as time went on. It became a Palestinian problem only starting about 1970. The difficulties that the PLO got into in Jordan—conflict with King Hussein—was the beginning of a ground-swell of support in the Arab world for the Palestinians, instead of just “refugees”.

## Library of Congress

Now we see the issues in a different light than we saw them in 1967. When war broke, we were essentially interested in restoring the status quo ante. We wanted to assure the survival of King Hussein and hoped for an Arab-Israeli peace. It was not what it later became; i.e. self-determination for another people. The Middle East issues dragged on throughout my stewardship. I was bitterly opposed to re-arming either side unless the Russians were going to introduce sufficient quantities that would have required a response from us. It seemed to me that the Israelis had just won a major victory; they had the military equipment to make the victory possible; they virtually destroyed all the forces arrayed against them—Egypt had nothing left. It seemed to me that under those circumstances, it was the wrong time to build up Israel's military might. I had a couple of lunches with the Russian Ambassador during this period and told him what I thought our and the Russians' policy should be. It had been sort of stated by the President—I had written it. What we did depended on what others would do. We would not re-arm carelessly anyone in the area. We had not provided Israel with many arms; they had been getting their supplies primarily from the French who had manufactured additional Mirages to be delivered after the War. The Israelis had paid for them before the war and title had passed to them, although deliveries were not to be made until after the end of the War. At the end of the War, the Mirages were still in France. Public opinion in France changed considerably and rapidly. I don't know what finally happened to those Mirages. I don't know whether they were ever delivered or not. The plane was made famous by the Six Day War, but I don't remember whether the Israelis ever got the additional ones they paid for or not. It was not an issue with me after I left government. In any case. I was very much opposed to the release of US F-4 Phantoms to the Israelis. At that time, this was a very advanced plane; it seemed to me that deliveries would escalate, both quantitatively and qualitatively, an arms race that didn't exist at particular time. So I thought it was wrong. The planes were not released while I was Assistant Secretary, but I knew that eventually I would lose on the F-4 issue. It was one of the reasons I left government. We indeed eventually fueled an arms race, which did not help the situation. We overloaded the Israeli military arsenal with a plane that incidentally was sold or given to Iran in the Nixon

## Library of Congress

administration. Israel has continued to supply spare parts, including tires, which are the most important parts, for the Iranian F-4. The Iranians, I am told, could never figure out how much air to put in the tires; they either put too much or not enough. So a set of tires would only last one mission. Fortunately, from the Iranian point of view, Israel was making the tires and sold them to Iran which kept their fleet of F-4s going at a time when we still had hostages in Tehran. If that is the action of a friendly ally, I don't see it. All of this of course happened long after I left the government. I might just note that Cy Vance called me in February, 1977 to ask me to go to Iran as Ambassador. I was then senior Vice-President of COMSAT and had agreed orally to stay five years. I didn't feel that I should break that commitment. Furthermore, I lacked about two years before I would be eligible for a government pension. So I declined the offer. He asked me whether I thought that the Shah was in trouble. I told him that I certainly thought so, but I thought that he would last through another Ambassador. In any case, I told Vance that I could not take the job.

Let me turn now to the Cyprus crisis. Pete Hart has just written a book, to which I wrote the preface. That preface covers almost everything that I would like to say about the Cyprus crisis. There were some amusing aspects and some horrible ones. The press was so focused on the Vietnam War that no one was paying much attention to events in Cyprus, where the old conflicts between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots were once again active. It was a complex and delicate situation. I thought that we should send a special envoy as quickly as possible. The President did not want anymore special envoys; he did not want the US involved in any more world crises. We had an intercepted message that clearly said that the Turks, weather permitting, would invade Cyprus the following morning. When I got the message, I went to see all the people who had an interest, including Nick Katzenbach, who was a tower of strength in this crisis. I saw Rusk briefly about sending a special envoy. As I said, the President did not favor it. He didn't want to get bogged down in another mess. Nick and I talked to him and told him that he either had to send a special envoy or troops would be moving into Cyprus, thereby initiating a war with which we would have to deal. The question was which was

## Library of Congress

the preferable situation. The President then asked whom we would suggest. Katzenbach and I had reviewed a list of names and our first choice was Cy Vance. Cy had not had much diplomatic involvement, although he had participated in a task force chaired by Gene Rostow which had dealt with a number of Middle East issues such as the freedom of the seas and the naval fleet, That is when I first really worked with Vance and I was greatly impressed. I was anxious that he take the Cyprus assignment. I told the President that it had to be done quickly; that the envoy had to be on his way that day. We agreed that I would take a briefing book and all the material we had on the Cyprus issue up to New York. Vance agreed to take on the job, although he suffered terribly from a bad back. We crafted a letter to the Turks; the last letter written to them on the subject of Cyprus was in 1964 had been so insulting that they had never forgotten about it. That 1964 letter had threatened them with great retribution if they invaded Cyprus at that time. So our new letter had to be tactful. Had we asked the Turks whether they would consider the despatch of a special envoy, the answer would have been negative. So we had to get Vance into the air the moment we announced his trip. I took a military plane to New York and sat on it with Vance, briefing him while we were parked at a hangar. He asked me what his instructions were. I said: "They are very simple, Cy. Stop the war". He said he didn't know much about the issue, but I told him that he would by the time he got to Cyprus and had an opportunity to read all the material I had brought him. John Walsh from the Secretariat was along and he did noble work. Interestingly enough, the press did not notice our actions. I don't remember exactly the day Cy went, but there was a Sunday night supper hosted by Polly and Joe Kraft. Betty and I were invited but I had to work at the office. So Betty went alone and when asked where I was said that I was working "as usual". Everybody groaned and assumed that it was the Arab-Israeli problem that was keeping me occupied. No one had noticed that we had a Cyprus crisis.

One other interesting aspect was that the Greek coup, which had occurred just a short time before, had eliminated all the free press. The Greek press was ordered to leave the

## Library of Congress

situation alone. If the Greek press had been as inflamed as the Turkish one, we would never have reached a settlement.

Cy Vance pulled off one of the great negotiation coups in history. I talked to him by phone daily. Very little of what transpired was ever recorded in writing. Dean Rusk was preoccupied with Vietnam but I briefed him on the situation from time to time; Gene Rostow, for some reason, was uninvolved, which was just as well because his involvement would have been a disaster; Nick Katzenbach left me pretty much alone although I reported to him daily. Essentially, the Bureau handled the crisis. If it had not worked we would have taken the blame; fortunately, it was successful and everybody thought that was pretty good. Several years later, while I was at COMSAT, I got a call from State Department, saying they wanted to reconstruct the events of that weekend, which was Thanksgiving weekend, 1967. So the Department got all of us together: Arthur Goldberg, who had been our representative at the U.N., the three Ambassadors—Toby Belcher (Cyprus), Pete Hart (Turkey) and Phil Talbot (Greece)—John Walsh, Vance and myself. We spent a whole weekend at Airlie House reconstructing the Cyprus crisis of 1967. I don't know what happened to the voluminous book that came out of that Airlie House conference, but it included a lot of material that might have helped the next Cyprus crisis, which did result in a Turkish invasion of the island and a worse situation than we had before and the death of my dear friend, Rodger Davies, who had been one of my deputies in NEA. But the story does not quite end there. In 1973, I was invited to go to Rome to participate in a meeting between Clerides (Greek Cypriot) and Denktash (Turkish Cypriot), who wanted to meet with an international group who would listen to them and advise them on how progress toward peace might be made. This was before the 1974 invasion. Cy Vance, Pete Hart, Phil Talbot and I were invited along with others. We met for several days in Rome and listened to Clerides and Denktash. They were a remarkable pair. They had known each other for many years; they had fought each other and had saved each other on many occasions; each recognized that they needed each other, but they argued most vigorously. A man by the name of Villemi, from Yugoslavia, chaired the



## Library of Congress

sessions. There were representatives of the Greek government there, some of whom became Cabinet members later; Michael Stewart of the U.K. was there. The pattern was that one of the international group would present a topic to be discussed. I was given "The external influences on the Cyprus problem". I made a presentation which suggested that the Cypriots must not look to any outside forces to resolve their differences. They could not count on any other nation. I told them that I had had a terrible time persuading the President of the United States to become involved in 1967 and I was confident that it would be equally difficult task if not worst to try to get the US involved in 1973 or any time on the future. The Cypriots should not count on the United States. After the commentary of the international participant, Clerides and Denktash would take over and scream at each other for the rest of the day. At 5 p.m. we would adjourn and the two of them would go to the bar as if they were the closest of friends and never uttered a cross word. That was without a doubt one of the most interesting non-diplomatic experiences of my life. I left Rome with some optimism, having thought that some progress had been made. But it all collapsed. I didn't agree with the way our government handled the issue subsequently. We should have injected ourselves quickly; we should have sent another envoy, perhaps Vance again. But we didn't and the whole situation became a disaster. Oddly enough, after that disaster and after the death of Rodger Davies (US ambassador to Cyprus), I got a telegram asking me whether I would return to Rome to meet with the two Cypriots again. I am sure they asked the same group of international participants who had attended the 1973 conference. I replied that I would be glad to do so, but I never heard another word. I don't know what happened. In any case, in 1973, we had some very good and vigorous exchanges with the two key Cypriots. When I was involved directly in 1967, the Greeks made very difficult political concessions, which went unnoticed because they were not permitted to appear in the controlled Greek press. But in Turkey, the issue was widely debated because there the press there was freer and raised the political temperature. I recommend that anyone who works on Cyprus read Peter Hart's book, just recently published.

## Library of Congress

*Q: In discussing these various crises and your various assignments, you have run across and dealt with some very important people. You dealt with some very tough issues. What is the most influential factor in a crisis situation in either causing it or solving it? Is it individuals, diplomats or is it history or social problems that exist? What do individuals contribute to a crisis and its solution?*

BATTLE: The important ingredient in the resolution of these problems is have someone who knows something about them—someone involved. In our government, it is the lowly desk officer in the State Department who knows all of the details. But when there is a change in the country and the that change may turn out to be an East-West issue, it becomes the largest issue in town. The tendency is for the senior officials to grab the ball, elevate the issue to the White House and the NSC—in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict one of our main problems was Gene Rostow. The three people who got deeply involved in that problem were Leonard Meeker, the Department's Legal Advisor, Joe Sisco, the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations and me, as Assistant Secretary for NEA. The three of us got along well; the problem was the intervention created by the requirement to clear messages with a lot of others. The Cyprus crisis, on the other hand, was the best managed crisis in which I have been involved. It was handled essentially by phone between Vance and me and was not dealt with at the Presidential level. There were no levels that interfered and slowed the process down. Now I think you have to keep the President and the Secretary informed, but in the main, the management of the problem should be left to those who have a background in it. I didn't know enough about Cyprus, but I had people on my staff who did. I would brief a congressional subcommittee without particular effort because the crisis had not become a public issue. It became one in the last two or three days, but until then it passed unnoticed. The fact that it broke over a Thanksgiving holiday period also helped in keeping it under control.

It is essential that any task force that deals with a crisis include the people most knowledgeable regardless of rank. This is sometimes an awkward problem because

## Library of Congress

obscure pieces of real estate around the world—countries that are relatively insignificant—all of a sudden become vastly important because of East-west conflict or because of their relationships to area problems. In recent crisis situations—Nicaragua, Panama and others—the individual who dealt with those countries day by day knew more about than the top brass who had to focus on many other problems. It is a difficult melding of expertise and political acumen. I don't know how you generalize about it. Everybody at the senior levels loves to get involved in each crisis; that is the way they make their reputations and get their names in the papers. This is a dangerous force. The capacity to keep quiet is relatively limited. The crisis, we used to say “made the senior Foreign Service officer”. And that was true to a degree. But he or she were made for the right reason., I thought. Those who knew the country situation should be called upon at least to accompany and brief the Department's senior officers who generally had little knowledge of small countries. The sweep of history on all these matters is difficult to identify. I don't know that I can say what is most important. I don't think the individual is the key factor; it is usually the tide of political and economic change. What we are seeing now in the East-West context is amazing; it is part however of a flow of history and it is the economic difficulties in Eastern Europe that led inevitably to today's situation, rather than Gorbachev taking over and running things. The line is uncertain and not very clear, but most of what happened in Eastern Europe resulted from a pent-up economic and political emotions that found expression. The time was ripe for constructive progress. It may have been perhaps permitted by Gorbachev who is an unusual person who has done an unusual job.

*Q: To carry this question a little further, you mentioned Gorbachev and the events in Eastern Europe. Would say that President Nasser was the result of the environment rather than being its creator? Was the 1967 war inevitable? Was Nasser partly responsible for it? Were the leaders of Israel at the time also individually responsible? If there had been a different set of individuals, might there have been a different outcome? Secondly, was there anything that our Ambassador in Egypt or our Ambassador in Israel could have*

## Library of Congress

*done, not at the moment of war, but before war appeared inevitable, to influence Nasser and the Israelis to change policy directions?*

BATTLE: That is an interesting question. I think that another war between Egypt and Israel was inevitable. There were too many existing factors and sufficient political requirements to build up military force to fight. So I think war was going to happen one day. But certainly Nasser triggered it. He by his own unfortunate speeches had created a political situation that he was unable to master. He got carried away. Whether an Ambassador could have had any impact, I don't think so. Maybe I just don't want to believe that he could have. My departure from Cairo and the fact that there was no Ambassador after me to see Nasser for a long time—some weeks—was not good. I have had Egyptians tell me that if I had stayed, matters would have been different. I don't believe that for a second. We might have had a better chance of curtailing the war itself if we had someone able to communicate with Nasser, but I don't believe it would have made any major difference. I mentioned earlier that I was offered the Ambassadorship to Iran in 1977. One of the reasons the administration wanted me to go because I had known the Shah and had dealt with him on several occasions. I was a known commodity to him and establishing rapport with him would have been relatively easy. But I don't believe for one second that my assignment would have changed the course of history. Bill Sullivan, a very competent officer, went even though he had not any Middle East experience, but then neither did when I went to Cairo. Most of the events are historically driven. I do believe that history can be led; I think you can anticipate and make a difference. For example, I think Nixon, who had been a particularly bad influence as a member of the “China lobby”, saw—or maybe Henry Kissinger saw—that something could be done with the PRC. I thought his trip to Peking was brilliant. He grabbed the initiative because he anticipated what was happening in China which made the trip possible. Vietnam was an interesting problem. One of the main reasons for the Vietnam involvement was that Lyndon Johnson did not want to have happen to him what had happened to Harry Truman, who was charged with the loss of China. It is a ridiculous political gambit that gets played in this country; if

## Library of Congress

something goes wrong. it is the fault of the President. Harry Truman did not lose China; it was not ours to lose. The internal revolutionary forces there were compelling. In the case of Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson was terrified of being charged with losing all the countries—the “domino” theory—and I have heard him saying things like “I am not going to be charged with the loss of Vietnam”. the American could have been led to accept the developments in Vietnam better than they were able to accept the war when it finally came and our deep involvement in it. It seems to me that the national leadership has to anticipate the broad sweep of history and try to lead the country not for short term political gain, but for longer term recognition of the realities of the situation that can be coped with. We don't always do that; that is what us got so deeply involved in Vietnam. The Korean war had many factors; I think that was less obvious that we could have avoided that one. The politics of that situation and our decision to get into a war there was not particularly stimulated by public pressure. The administration was afraid of public pressure, but it didn't happen because it didn't have a chance to develop; the war just occurred. My conclusion, I guess, is that there are a lot of factors that come to play, but the broad sweeping leadership should be the province of the President and the Secretary of State. They should anticipate the areas and the policy directions that we think will be most constructive for the United States. If we find ourselves in crises that we didn't anticipate or don't know much about or appear to be outside the main stream, we should rely heavily on trained people from the career service in the Department of State who have been dealing with those countries and those situations.

*Q: A specific question, if I may. In light of your experiences as Ambassador and Assistant Secretary and having been constantly with foreign officials, what do you think of the importance of personal popularity in a country of assignment? We read sometimes that Mr X had been an Ambassador to County Y and was terribly popular and people loved him? Is that important?*

BATTLE: I don't think you send Ambassadors to be loved. Keeping people in posts too long because they “are loved” is generally speaking, a mistake. You need to build up

## Library of Congress

respect from the key government officials in any country to which you are accredited. That is very important. There is nothing wrong with mass popularity; it is a plus, but it is not the plus. It is not the attribute that makes the difference. I think of various foreign Ambassadors who served in Washington during the period I worked for Dean Acheson and when I knew intimately what he did every day. The two Ambassadors who had the greatest impact on him were Hume Wrong of Canada and Oliver Franks of Great Britain. Neither one of them made the slightest effort to be popular in the United States. They concentrated on the top two or three people of the our government and primarily on Dean Acheson, with whom they dealt regularly—private lunches, family gatherings, etc. What made that arrangement so workable was that Hume Wrong, Oliver Franks and Dean Acheson were three of the most brilliant minds that I have encountered. For that reason, they clicked very well together. The personal popularity was not a concern. Oliver Franks entertained very little, despite the pressure on that Embassy to entertain. I guess it is still the most popular Embassy in terms of going there for parties. They and the French are the most popular. But the Canadians don't have to be popular; they are taken for granted. What worked for them during the Acheson period was the intellectual force that Hume Wrong had. His DCM was Tommy Stone, who was married to Mrs. Noyes and they did most of the entertaining. The Ambassador had no interest in that what-so-ever. He was interested in the intellectual aspects of the job and did his duty very well and effectively. That was true of the British as well. There are a lot of cases-e.g. Pearl Mesta—who undoubtedly was very popular in Luxembourg, but I would doubt seriously that she had much intellectual influence on anybody there. She gave wonderful parties, I gather, serving American hot-dogs, which got her a lot of newspaper coverage, but that is not what I consider effective representation. I must tell you a funny story that I heard Dean Acheson tell Joseph Bech who had held every Cabinet seat in Luxembourg including Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He was very popular in Europe and everybody trusted him because he represented such a small country which did not raise any fears in anyone. So he knew everything. He was very wise. Acheson told Bech that Mrs. Mesta had been selected to be

## Library of Congress

the next Minister to Luxembourg. Bech said in a classic remark: "It is a great honor for so small a country!". That was a diplomatic answer; we all knew what he thought.

*Q: We are spending a lot of money training people in foreign languages. I know that you didn't speak Arabic. Most of our Chiefs of Missions to Arab countries speak little, if at all. What is the value of the language to a diplomat to diplomats, not only the Chiefs of Mission, but to other staff members as well? How much weight should be given to this factor?*

BATTLE: That would seem to me to depend on the post. When I went to Denmark in 1963, I started studying the Danish language. Everyone in the country spoke English. They started learning in about the third or fourth grade and had several years of it. No matter what I did, and I tried, there was no great interest in speaking Danish to me. I actually made one or two speeches in Danish; everyone thought it was hilariously funny and laughed heartily. The speeches were only about ten minutes. That was the only use I made of my Danish. It was perfectly clear that I was never going to use it again. There was very chance that I would ever return. Going to France was a different story. There the people generally don't speak English very well. English and French as languages don't mesh very well. You use different mouth muscles for French than you use for English. My French is atrocious; however, I did force myself to speak it. I was ill equipped for a lot of things that came my way in my diplomatic career and I don't hide it. I think it is very important in countries such as France, where the local language is the only means of communication, as compared with Egypt where it did not make an iota of difference in my relations with the press and the government. You have to recognize that many of the Egyptian Foreign Service officers did not speak Arabic either or spoke very poor Arabic. They were perfectly happy to speak French or English; they were not so good in Arabic—at least that is what I was always told—. I was not in a position to gauge that allegation. My view is that we should concentrate on the three or four key languages and make sure that everybody in the Service speak at least Spanish or French. Then here and there, the Service should have that expert who speaks the obscure language that is rarely used,



## Library of Congress

except by the natives of the country. That is a difficult balance to achieve; I don't think it makes a difference if we speak any Scandinavian languages. I see no reason to spend as much time and money that I spent in learning Danish, but I would have been much better off concentrating on French because as it worked out, I went to NATO after Copenhagen. Being fluent in French would have been a great help. I support language skills, but I have seen some very successful people, who were not linguists and I have seen disastrous situations where the lack of language was a problem.

I might mention the first major international conference I attended which took place in May, 1949—it was the “Big Four” meeting in Paris at the Palais de Marbre Rose. This was in the days before simultaneous translation. There were no machines. We sat there every afternoon from about three to about eight o'clock at night. The four delegations were the British, the Russians, the French and ourselves. Each speech had to be translated so everything had to be said three times: the original and then in two other languages. For example, the Russians would translate into English. They had a short little man who probably didn't speak any language fluently, but he certainly didn't speak English. His English was comparable to my Russian, which was nil. He would drag on and on and on. I was sitting right behind Dean Acheson and next to Chip Bohlen, who was fluent in Russian. I asked Chip whether the Russians didn't have someone better who spoke better English. Chip said: “Everyone in the Russian delegation speak better English. This a deliberate political ploy. It is intended not to let us know what they were saying; it is intended to confuse us.” I remembered that later when we had simultaneous translations and the process changed. In 1949, the original speech would last forty-five minutes and then there were two translations. It was endless.

*Q: Mr. Ambassador, you told us of your career in the Foreign Service and the State Department. You had several other careers thus far. Would you tell us a little about your experiences at Williamsburg, at COMSAT, at the Middle East Institute and at SAIS?*

## Library of Congress

BATTLE: The Williamsburg job came in the middle of my career. I was at NATO, not fully employed and not challenged. There wasn't much for the International Staff to do at that time. I was on Lord Ismay's personal staff. We got along very well and I liked him, but I wasn't really being used. I had been turned down for a couple of other assignments for political reasons—i.e. that I had been too close to Dean Acheson and Averell Harriman and others. I was upset that I wasn't being as fully utilized as I might have been. When Winthrop Rockefeller asked to me to fly to London and then offered me a job, I took it. I had not been involved in politics at all, except as the assignment by the Department to be Dean Acheson's assistant brought me in touch with politics. I spent four and half years at Williamsburg and was essentially bored there as well. I was too young to have taken that job. It is a job that now at the age of 71 I could do brilliantly, but at the age of 39, I had a little more vigor than now. I came to Williamsburg directly from Paris. We had small children and it was a lovely place to raise them. But I was getting very restive towards the end of the four and half years and rejoined the government in the early part of the Kennedy era with relish. But Williamsburg was a pleasant interlude; two years would have been fine; close to five wasn't. I became very close to Winthrop Rockefeller, who was a great friend—he has since died. I got to know a lot of people whom I probably would not have met otherwise. That was pleasant and may have helped me a little when I became Assistant Secretary for Cultural Affairs because I met a lot of leaders of American cultural activities.

After leaving the government, I went to COMSAT as Vice-President. I stayed there for five years, but again, I did not feel fully utilized. So when I was offered the Presidency of the Middle East Institute, I took it at about one-third of my previous salary. After a time, I realized that while I was having a very good time at the Institute, I wasn't making enough money to support my kids through college. COMSAT wanted me to return. So I returned as senior Vice-President—the number 2 position in the company. I never thought that I was very good there, but they didn't seem to be aware of that. Each time I left, I went through the same pattern. I went to see the chairman of the board to tell him that I was

## Library of Congress

leaving. His immediate response was: "How much do you want to be paid?". I would reply: "Joe, you are over-paying me now. I am not as good here as you think". I told him that I would be taking a huge cut in pay to do something else. When I returned to COMSAT after 18 months at the Institute, I was busier and I liked it better. I told them that I would stay five years during which my pension would be vested and then I would move on. I told them not to expect me to stay longer. When the five year period had expired, they asked me to stay on and I did stay another year.

At that point, I was offered the chairmanship of an unestablished John Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute. They offered me a five year contract; I told them to make it three years because I got restless after three years. This is why the Foreign Service's assignment policies suited me very well. I told them that I knew that I didn't want to stay for more than three years. But I stayed for a little more than four years. I also think there is such a thing as "the right time to leave", before the cheering stops. That was part of my tendencies. I enjoyed the SAIS period very much. Harold Brown, the former Secretary of Defense, succeeded me as Chairman of the Institute. It was started during my days and was build up by Harold and myself. It is now a forceful institution.

Another thing that I enjoyed enormously was the Bacon House-DACOR association. I ended up having a fairly large role in that. Mrs. Robert Low Bacon, who was an important figure in this country, was a great friend of mine. I met her socially a couple of times, but when I was Assistant Secretary for Cultural Affairs, I terminated a contract with the American National Theater Academy (ANTA). I was unaware of the fact that Mrs. Bacon was on its Board of Directors. I terminated the overseas performing arts that they were sending abroad. I took the termination action because the contract had become a disaster; everything in the world had gone wrong with it. There were some real scandals just under the surface and I found out about them. So I decided to start over. Mrs. Bacon wanted to get me fired. She began to call Republican Senators and said that she was really upset; she was a big wheel in the Republican Party. I got a couple of calls from the Hill. So I called her and told her that it was time for us to have a discussion. She invited me for

## Library of Congress

tea that afternoon. I took my files and after a few polite exchanges, I handed them to her and asked her to review them. She sat there and read while I drank the tea. When she got through, she said: "You had no alternative". I agreed with her. I pointed out that I had tried to save the program, but I couldn't do it without some drastic changes. I suggested that instead of fighting me, she join me in a fresh start. She agreed. She liked to entertain and would do so for my program. That included foreign leaders and she would give each of them a party. Since we didn't have much entertainment money, she was very helpful. When I went to Cairo, I assumed that my relationship with Mrs. Bacon would end. But it didn't. The day I returned from Cairo—she had read about my return in the paper—she invited me for dinner. Betty and the children were not in Washington at the time—they had stayed in Cairo to finish the school year. The dinner was on the night the Greek coup occurred. I was called away from the dinner table. Some press were at the dinner as well and I didn't want to return to the dinner table. So I wrote Mrs. Bacon a note saying that I couldn't explain why I was leaving, but that she would find out when she read the paper in the morning. I thought that my return would disrupt the party. I thanked her in the note for the lovely dinner and left. She understood and it was perfectly all right. After a while, she got me to be host. Betty and I would go to dinner at her house and I would act as host. She used to give parties for all the Congressmen who went to Ditchley meetings. Her dinners were more like seminars; more like a French salon than anything else that went on in Washington than I knew anything about. She would sometimes plan them around a topic—outer space, Iran, etc. Sometime she wouldn't and I would sit across the table from her. The first time that happened, I was absolutely terrified because there were a couple of members of the Cabinet present. I was by no means a senior official. She turned to me and asked me to lead the conversation. That was like leading a prayer. She didn't like men and women separated; so substantive issues were to be discussed in her presence right there at the table. We became great friends. When she started Bacon House, she asked me to be the President of the Foundation. Eventually, that merged with DACOR and I think that has done a great deal for DACOR. It has produced a much better place to entertain, renewed interest in their lunches. She kept insisting that the place not turn into

## Library of Congress

a club house, but a place for substantive discussions. That was an important ingredient in the merger.

I stayed at SAIS until I decided to free lance. I had two or three clients—two of them retained me while I was still in SAIS. So I decided to start my own office—Lucius D. Battle and Associates. The associates were people I would call when I had a problem. Otherwise, I would do the job myself. One of my clients agreed to give me an office and a secretary for about one-fourth of my time. That worked out very well in terms of my physical requirements and the financial aspects. There was one huge draw-back; I was put in an office of international consultants, which were paid by a foreign country. We had a common reception area, a common board room, but beyond that the four consultants had nothing in common with each other. I got very lonely during the day. I had my three clients and occasionally would do other things. The clients were all out of town; I was not accustomed to not having people come into my office all during the day or not to have the phone ring all day long. My clients would call when they would be in town and we had lunch; they continued to pay me, but they didn't come to the office very often. I would sit there waiting for something to happen and nothing much did happen. I was being paid and therefore had no complaints, but I was bored. After 18 months, I decided that I wouldn't do that any longer.

In 1977, I had read in the press that Jimmy Carter, near the end of the Shah's regime, had send a memorandum asking what Islam was all about and why hadn't the US been able to cope with Islamic issues. He asked whether there were other situations such as Iran's and the Shah's; whether fundamentalism in the Islamic world was or would be a problem for us. There were excellent questions. Unfortunately, the memo leaked. It had been addressed to agencies of the government dealing in international affairs. The headline of course said :”CIA Investigating Islam”. It was unbelievable, but that is what happened. I read it; thought it was horrible, but funny. The next thing I knew both the White House and State Department called to ask me to head a national committee to observe the 14th Century of Islam. They said that they were trying to rebuild our relationships and

## Library of Congress

respond to Islamic concerns. My immediate reaction was to tell them that I was not the right person for the job. I tried to avoid it. Nobody else wanted the job. They had started with Jack McCloy and David Rockefeller and they obviously were not interested, although both agreed to be on the committee. So I took the job on and put together the most distinguished committee that I ever served on, much less chaired. They all participated in the effort that went on for two or three years. Then it was moved to American University where Chris Van Hollen headed it. I had told the government officials that I would not run the program. I was willing to be the titular head and to set up the Committee, but I wouldn't run the program. I didn't have time. So after a period, Chris Van Hollen ran it and he had a suite of offices at American University and we moved the Committee there for about a year.

Then due to the actions of a special search committee, headed by Pete Hart and Dayton Mak, I was asked to return to the Middle East Institute and I have been here for three or four years. I had agreed to stay three; I have been here almost four. I have retired more times than most people. I have gone to new work more times than most people and for all I know, I might do that again.

*Q: Mr. Ambassador, in order to get all of your experiences in the order, would you please list them in chronological sequence?*

BATTLE: I went to work for the Department of State on October 1, 1946. On March 1, 1947, I moved to the Bureau of European Affairs—the Canadian desk—which was really the beginning of my career. On March 1, 1949, I became the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State Dean Acheson. I stayed there until the Summer of 1952 when I became Deputy Special Assistant for Mutual Security Affairs. Ed Martin was the head of it and I was his deputy. I became acting head of it later. I went to Denmark in early 1953 and stayed there until 1955, when I was transferred to the NATO headquarter's staff. In the early Fall of 1956, I went to work for the Rockefellers and became Vice-President of Colonial Williamsburg. Stayed there until 1961, when I returned to government to

## Library of Congress

become the Executive Secretary of the State Department. I was there for just less than two years when I became Assistant Secretary for Cultural Affairs. In the fall, 1964 I became Ambassador to Egypt. In March, 1967, I returned to Washington to become Assistant Secretary for the Near East and South Asia. I left in 1968 to join COMSAT, where I stayed for almost five years. In June, 1973 I came to the Middle East Institute. I returned to COMSAT on December 1, 1974. I stayed six years there and in 1980 I started the John Hopkins Foreign Policy Institute. I left there after about four years, free lanced for 18 months until late November 1986. And then I have been here ever since. What happens next, I don't know.

*Q: Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.*

End of interview